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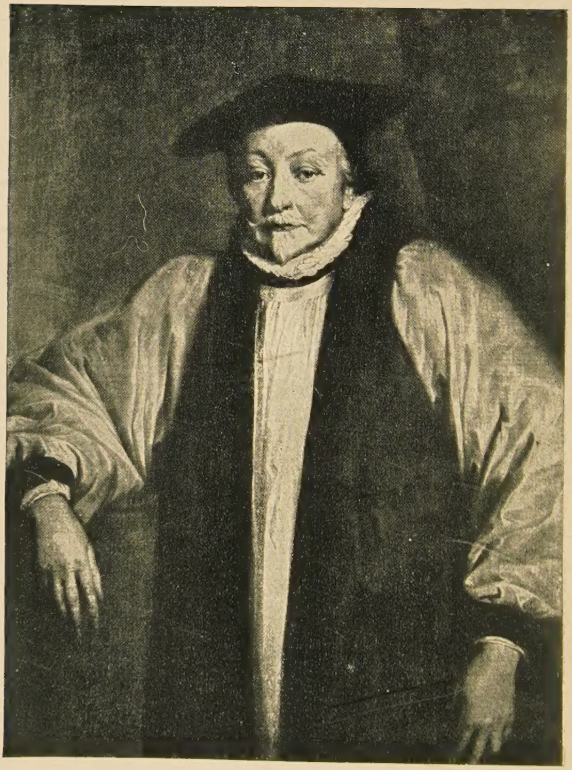
CHURCH TEACHING
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
EDITED BY THE
DEAN OF CARLISLE

THE REFORMATION



ARCHBISHOP LAUD

Page 185.

THE REFORMATION

By

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PREFACE

LIKE its companions in this series, the present volume is written primarily for "young people." That term, however, may fairly be regarded as rather elastic, and the readers whom I have had in view are the elder boys and girls—those, for example, in the last year of school life. No doubt, much younger children can be taught the bare history of the Reformation; but they can scarcely be given a grasp of its principles, and I am convinced that the former of these is valueless without the latter. So it is in order to give the reader a sketch, however slight and imperfect, of the principles underlying each of that complex series of movements known as "The Reformation," rather than to present him with a mere chronicle of names, dates, and events, that these pages have been

written. Perhaps, too, one may hope that any loss of readers at one end of the scale involved by this choice may be made good at the other. Should this "Story of the Reformation" be rather beyond the understanding of the smaller children, conceivably it may prove of service to readers who, though "young people" no longer, wish for a concise book on the subject, and have insufficient leisure for the study of larger works or complete histories of our Church.

Brief as the book necessarily is, it seemed advisable to include in its scope the whole period from the political breach with Rome to the Restoration Settlement. To narrate the separation from Rome alone, or to end the record arbitrarily with the days of Elizabeth, is to leave the story half-told. For an understanding of our Church's position today a knowledge of its struggle with Puritanism is not less essential than that of its separation from the Roman obedience. Indeed, Puritan as well as Papal aggression had to be overcome before the Reformation of the English Church was in any real sense complete.

It has been no easy task to cover so long a

period as 130 years in so small a volume, while attempting at the same time to make its pages readable. I have tried to remember throughout that this book does not profess to be a History of the English Church from 1532 to 1662, but merely a "Story of the Reformation." Of set purpose, therefore, I have omitted reference to ecclesiastical personages and events within the period, whatever their intrinsic interest, which have no direct bearing upon one or other of the Reformation movements. Again, as my book is one of a series, I have been able to include in it far less detail than otherwise would have been necessary on subjects relevant to mine but treated separately elsewhere. Thus, I have dealt quite briefly with the history of the Prayer-book, since I could refer the reader to the Dean of Carlisle's "Story of the Prayer Book," a companion volume to this, for fuller information.

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The Reformation

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION

THE aim of this book is to tell briefly the story of the Reformation so far as it affected the English Church. But before beginning our narrative, there are some preliminary points as to which we must be clear. First of all, we must understand what it is that we are about to study. We must define what we mean by "the Reformation," since the term is often used in ways which are misleading or incomplete. There are many people to whom the idea conveyed by it is somewhat as follows: "a religious movement carried out by Henry VIII., who overthrew the Roman Catholic religion, and made a new

Church—the Protestant Church of England —to take its place." That is like the famous definition of the crab as "a small red animal which walks backwards"—an excellent description, it was observed, save for the facts that a crab is not red, is not an animal, and does not walk backwards. The Reformation was not a movement, but a long series of movements. It was very far from being completed in the days of Henry VIII. So far as it went in his reign, it made political and social changes, but it was not a religious movement at all. And Henry did not create the Church of England, for the sufficient reason that it had existed already for nine hundred years before he came to the throne.

Setting aside so mistaken a definition of the Reformation as this, we find the word still used to describe only the contest between the English and Roman Churches, which ended, practically, in the reign of Elizabeth. It seems better to employ it in a wider sense. The conflict with Rome was no more than the first part of the struggle through which our Church had to pass before its true position was won. People speak of "the Elizabethan settlement," and the term is convenient for

historians, but "the Elizabethan unsettlement" would give a more accurate idea of the Church's condition in the reign of this queen. Freed from the claims of Rome, the Church had to enter upon another struggle, both long and bitter, with Puritanism. And of the two enemies Puritanism was in some ways the more dangerous. Romanism attacked from without; Puritanism undermined from within. Romanism imperilled the character of the English Church, but Puritanism menaced its very existence. Romanism, in the time of Mary, and Puritanism, in the days of Oliver Cromwell, had each its period of triumph. Each finally lost its hold upon the English people by the use to which its triumph was put. Only when each had been tried and each had failed, was the true position of the National Church established, and not till then was the Reformation complete. So if we wish at the outset to have before us a definition of the Reformation (although to frame one in a sentence is not easy), perhaps we may attempt it thus: By the Reformation of the English Church we mean that series of political, social, and doctrinal movements, extending over 130 years, as

THE FINAL RESULT OF WHICH THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF THE COUNTRY WAS FREED FROM THE POLITICAL DANGERS OF PAPAL AND REGAL TYRANNY, FROM THE SOCIAL EVIL OF INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAD OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS, AND FROM THE DOCTRINAL ERRORS OF ROMANISM AT ONE EXTREME, OF PURITANISM AT THE OTHER.

Our study will begin, then, with the separation from Rome; it will end with the downfall of Puritanism. In March, 1532, Parliament passed the first of a series of measures overthrowing the power of the Pope; in May, 1662, it agreed to the Act of Uniformity which ordered the use of the Prayer-book as revised, for the last time, at the Restoration. For our present purpose we may take these two dates as marking the beginning and the end of the Reformation period. Yet, while the end was fairly definite, it is only with approximate truth that we can fix the beginning of the quarrel with Rome which was the first stage of the Reformation. There had been preliminary skirmishes before the open war. There had been a growing feeling of hostility before the preliminary skirmishes. The points worth remembering, because Roman

Catholic writers are apt to assert that the source of the English Reformation was merely the wish of a particularly immoral king to make a particularly immoral marriage. We shall find that such a statement is quite inaccurate. Henry VIII.'s matrimonial plans were indeed the occasion of the breach with Rome, but they were far from being the cause of it. Indeed, the king's wishes must have remained unfulfilled, the action taken by Parliament at his bidding would have been impossible, had not the way been prepared by a long series of previous events. These events, with the changes in public opinion resulting from them, had made it certain that the Reformation would come. The only points in doubt were the mode and the moment of its coming.

Three separate movements completed the breach with Rome—a political movement, which abolished the papal supremacy; a social movement, which swept away the monasteries; and an intellectual movement, which modified the doctrines held by the English Church. Throughout these changes, as we shall see, our Church preserved all its essential features. We shall find that no idea of

creating a new Church occurred to those under whose influence the claims of the Pope were rejected. In fact, the word used to describe the whole process is well chosen—it was the "re-formation," not the "formation" of our Church which began in the sixteenth century. But before describing in detail the first part of the Reformation—the political, social, and intellectual movements which broke the tie with Rome,—we shall need to answer the preliminary question: how came there a tie to be broken? What, in other words, were the relations between the English and Roman Churches, how had they arisen, and what was their extent?

We cannot understand too clearly that England was not, as is so often alleged, "a Roman Catholic country" before the Reformation. Its Church throughout was the Church of England, not the Church of Rome. Between those two Churches the relations varied from time to time. That they should be close, until causes for dispute arose, was natural. Both were branches of the one Catholic, or Universal, Church of Christ. Both held the same three creeds. They had many, though not all, forms of worship in

common. To the Church which had numbered Gregory among its rulers, and Augustine among its missionaries, the indebtedness of the English Church was felt to be great. And to such reasons for their close association must be added others of a lower kind—reasons of political expediency on the part of the English Church, reasons of a love of power on the part of the Roman body. Yet, however close these relations became, they did not destroy for a moment the separate identity of the English Church. Whenever the Pope took steps designed to bring about such a result, they were strenuously resisted. A "Roman Catholic country," as we use the phrase to-day, means one in which the Church accepts the Pope as the unquestioned source of its doctrine and the unchallenged head of its government. Neither of these claims was admitted by the pre-Reformation Church of England.

With regard to doctrine, it must not be forgotten that Roman Catholicism of the twentieth century is very different from that of the sixteenth. For example, two doctrines most closely associated with the Roman Church of the present day are those of Papal

Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception. But the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility was adopted formally no longer ago than the year 1870, and that of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. Roman Catholicism, therefore, in the modern sense of the term, certainly was not the religion of our nation in the sixteenth century, for it did not exist. It may be said, however, that other doctrines, now regarded by us as false—such as those of transubstantiation and purgatory—were accepted by our Church until the Reformation. We are right to call them false; we are right also to admit that they were held for a considerable period by the English Church. But the point to be remembered is that they were not then, in any distinctive sense, Roman. They were accepted by the mediæval Church of England not because the Pope believed them, but as part of the common heritage of the whole Church. They were not received as an act of submission to the Pope, nor were they given up as an act of hostility to him. In an uncritical age the English Church imagined them to be justified by Scripture and primitive tradition. When fuller knowledge had shown these claims to

be unfounded, it rejected them. It acted throughout on its own authority as a branch of the Catholic Church of Christ, not as a subdivision of the Church of Rome. It did not lose its independence because its beliefs were shared for a time by another body. To a great extent they are so shared to-day. But our Church is not "Roman" because the same creed is recited at St. Paul's in London and St. Peter's in Rome. Or we may go further afield for an analogy. The exorcism of evil spirits is still practised by the followers of Mohammed. The exorcism of evil spirits formed, till 1552, a part of the English baptismal service. But it would seem a strange line of reasoning which took these facts to prove that England, until it abandoned exorcism as superstitious, must have been a Mohammedan country.

Apart from the regulation of doctrine, a claim which practically was never made, the Papacy did acquire, through a number of causes, considerable powers in this country. Their extent varied greatly from time to time, but this was decided in the main by the advantage to be gained by England, not by the claims of Rome. Fully to describe

these changing relations would be to set down at length the pre-Reformation history of our Church. Here we must be content to emphasise a few of the more salient points, and to show the nature of the connection between the English and Roman Churches.

I. The early British Church, established probably by the middle of the second century, seems in no way to have recognised the authority of the Pope, but to have been an offshoot of the Church of Gaul. With the mission of Augustine (597), the papal influence was felt in this country for the first time. Yet the ideas of Gregory, the great Pope who sent Augustine to England, differed vastly from those of his more ambitious and less tolerant successors. Our national Church is given by him its distinctive title—"The Church of the English"—and is not, in his eyes, a mere appanage of the See of Rome. In memorable words he bids Augustine not to insist upon conformity with the Roman forms of worship, but to select from the liturgies of Gaul, Rome, or any other Church, whatever may be pleasing to God and useful for the Church of England. On its own part the English Church was

quite prepared to recognise the primacy of the Pope, but it was not less prepared to resist interference with the powers duly vested in its own Archbishop. Both these points were made clear in the well-known case of Theodore and Wilfrid (678). Its own nominee having died, the English Church acquiesced in the choice by the Pope of a new Archbishop of Canterbury. This Archbishop was Theodore. Wilfrid of York resisted the subdivision of his diocese which Theodore proposed to make, and appealed to Rome. But in a matter relating to its own internal government, England would not allow the Archbishop to be overruled by any outside power. Wilfrid obtained a decision in his favour from the Pope, and returned to England with papal rescripts reversing the judgment of Theodore. They were simply ignored, and, as a punishment for appealing to a foreign bishop, Wilfrid was thrown into prison. Thus early was the principle upheld that the English Church had an independent existence, and that the authority of its own rulers was not to be set aside by the Pope.

II. From the time of the Norman Conquest, England, which had held previously

an isolated position, became a part of civilised western Christendom, thereby entering into closer relations with the See of Rome. We must be content with a brief mention of some of the causes contributing, from the eleventh century onwards, to the growth of papal influence. First, perhaps, should be named—although it was a factor less powerful in this country than in others—the ideal of a Holy Roman Empire. In its original form, this meant the welding of Europe into a great confederacy, having the Pope and an emperor as its joint and equal heads in spiritual and temporal affairs. But a new colour was given to this conception in the days of William the Conqueror by Gregory VII., one of the greatest of the Popes. He declared the power of all kings, including the emperor, to be derived from the occupant of the See of Peter, so that the latter should be accounted the supreme ruler over all Christian nations. In support of this claim he cited various documents, really forged in the eighth and ninth centuries, but then accepted as unquestionably genuine. It will be obvious that, according to this view, both the Church and Crown of England were subject to papal

jurisdiction. The theory first put forward by Gregory VII. (1073–1085) was developed still further by two of his successors—Innocent III. (1198–1216) and Boniface VIII. (1294–1303). Throughout it met with opposition in this country. No one questioned the authenticity of the documents upon which the papal pretensions were based, and the idea of a close union between all Christian states had much to commend it. But in practical affairs the continuous attempts of the Popes to exercise both a temporal and a spiritual authority, overruling that of king and archbishop, proved less and less tolerable as time went on. When at last the Reformation came, it was not a schism, or the breaking up of an earlier unity, but the definite rejection of claims which from the first had been met with protests, and at length had become insufferable.

III. Before the Conquest the State and Church were administered practically by the same hands. In the days of William I. the two became distinct, but State and Church worked harmoniously together. It was otherwise in the days of his successor, and between Rufus and Archbishop Anselm began a long

series of quarrels, with the king on one side, the Church on the other. Menaced by the king, Anselm, like others after him, turned to Rome for assistance. The aid thus given more than once was of great value to the English Church when threatened by regal tyranny. That value was recognised by the Papacy, which in turn was not slow to exact its price. Having given help to the English Church when it was wanted, it continued interference when it was not wanted at all. Representatives of the Pope, called legates, arrived from Rome to administer ecclesiastical business, paying very little regard to the English archbishops. From the year 1221 onwards, the Archbishop of Canterbury was recognised as the official legate by reason of his office. This was so far a gain that the stream of foreign legates ceased to pour into the country. But, unfortunately, it gave colour to the view that the English Archbishop was, after all, little more than the Pope's deputy. Moreover, in return for help given to the English Church, Rome had managed to secure for itself a very large share of patronage, and had a voice in the appointment of bishops and clergy, with the result that many

of the most important posts were filled by foreigners, who naturally would do their best to uphold the papal claims.

IV. The connection between England and Rome was strengthened by the Crusades, and these wars were made an excuse for drawing large sums of money from England into the papal coffers. Nor did taxation of this kind cease when the age of the Crusades were past. In an increasing degree the Papacy was becoming a political power, needing a constant supply of funds for the furtherance of its aims. For a large proportion it looked to our own country, and much of the lawful revenue of the Church became diverted to Rome.

V. The influence of the Pope was fostered to a great extent by the growing wealth and importance of the religious houses. Many of the most important monasteries were altogether outside the bishops' jurisdiction; they obeyed their own abbots, and those abbots were appointed by the Pope. We shall deal more fully with the monastic system in a later chapter. Nothing could be further from the truth than the popular idea that the monasteries were homes of gluttony and vice. By

the time that they were destroyed—inexcusable as was the manner of that destruction—they had lost their former usefulness, but for many centuries they had been of incalculable value to the national life. Yet the fact that these powerful bodies, owning large revenues and estates, showed little respect for the lawful authority of the English Church, made it more difficult for the Church, and indeed for the whole nation, to withstand the papal claims.

Such, then, were some of the ways in which the connection between the Roman and the English Churches grew closer as the centuries passed by. Sometimes the Church would seek the aid of Rome against a tyrannical king, at others it would invoke the protection of the king against the demands of Rome. Setting the good against the bad, we may say that up to the beginning of the thirteenth century the connection with Rome was of a kind to benefit the English Church, while after that time the harm, in an increasing degree, outweighed the good. Gradually the English Church and people awoke to this fact, and as they did so, a Reformation, in the sense of a definite repudiation

of the Papal claims, became more and more certain. When Henry VIII. wished, for his own purposes, to overthrow the Pope's supremacy, he had not to stir up a new feeling among Englishmen, but simply to transform into action feelings which had been gathering force for a long time past, and must in any case ere long have found some strong outward expression. For from the first, as we have said, despite all Roman influence and aggression, the national Church had preserved its independent existence. Some of the claims of Rome had been conceded for the sake of the advantage to be gained by such concession; some had been enforced, despite opposition; some had been resisted with notable success. Not for a moment had the English Church been merged in that of Rome, not for a moment had England been, in any true sense, a "Roman Catholic country."

We have traced in outline the process by which the influence of Rome grew up; now we must mention, with equal brevity, some of the causes which led to its downfall.

I. The character of the Papacy itself had

steadily deteriorated. In early days whatever authority was claimed by the Pope was claimed on spiritual grounds; he was the successor of St. Peter, and therefore the head of the church on earth. Gregory VII. was the first, as we have seen, to declare the Pope the source of all temporal, as well as of spiritual, authority. And, as this ideal was pushed further in subsequent times, as the Roman Church concerned itself more and more with political affairs, so did its spiritual influence decline. The Pope became the prince of an Italian State rather than the head of a world-wide Church. His cardinals were clever lawyers and astute politicians, who took Holy Orders merely to qualify for their position. These political aims of the Papacy led to disaster; for seventy years (1305–1376) the Pope was an exile in the south of France; from 1378 to 1414, two, and even three, men claimed to be Pope at the same time. All this did not tend to increase respect for the Papacy. Nor did the end of the schism in 1414 change the papal policy. In the succeeding years the best of those who filled the See of Rome were clever intriguers, the worst were men of notoriously bad character. Alexander VI.

(1492) was a byword for immorality. Julius II. (1503) set himself to extend the States of the Church, and led his army to battle in person. It is not surprising if Churchmen, in England as elsewhere, came to despair of the Papacy, and found it difficult to recognise the Apostolic authority of dissolute persons and political schemers. To show deference to the Pope as the spiritual head of Christendom and the successor of St. Peter was one thing; to obey the dictates of an ambitious Italian prince was quite another.

II. For, as the character of the Papacy degenerated in Rome, the national spirit was growing in England. An increased sense of power was felt by the middle classes. Our country began to realise its greatness. The idea of interference from any foreign power became more and more intolerable. Spiritual leadership was another matter, though again it was felt that the rights of the national Church must be kept inviolate. But it was not spiritual leadership which Rome asserted, except as an excuse for meddling with secular affairs and for exacting large sums of money from the English people. As the national feeling developed, men began to insist that Eng-

land must manage her own affairs, and should brook no dictation from without, whatever the pleas on which it might be based. The growth of this national spirit made the overthrow of the Pope's supremacy inevitable.

III. Such feelings caused the English people to view with resentment the continual drain of money from their own country to Rome. Apart from irregular taxation, the Pope had arrogated to himself the right of trying all matrimonial and a number of other causes. Litigation in the papal court was an affair of endless delays, and the ultimate judgment was based much less upon the merits of the case than upon the amount the litigant was able or willing to pay to the court officials. Little, therefore, as the English nation sympathised with Henry VIII.'s matrimonial schemes, it was prepared heartily to welcome the overthrow of the papal jurisdiction in such matters.

It has been pointed out above that the breaking of the ties between the English and Roman Churches was effected by three separate movements—political, social, and intellectual respectively. The causes specially contributing to the second and third of these

will be best dealt with in subsequent chapters, when the movements themselves are described. But what has been said here will enable the reader, it is hoped, to understand the position of affairs at the beginning of Henry VIII.'s reign, and to appreciate the fact that the times were then ripe for the political movement against Rome. We have seen how the relations between the English and Roman Churches came into being. We have dwelt upon the fact that this association at no time destroyed, though at intervals it imperilled, the distinctive existence of the Church of England. Realising that in the sixteenth century the breaking of this tie had become not merely desirable but of vital importance, we need not minimise the greatness of the debt incurred during earlier periods by our own Church to that of Rome. And of this debt the mission of Augustine forms but a small part. Much as papal interference in its later forms was to be deplored, there was more than one occasion when in early days it saved the English Church from becoming the mere appanage of the Crown. Afterwards, unfortunately, the protector tried in turn to play the tyrant, the claims of Rome increased as

its moral fitness to make those claims diminished, and spiritual comradeship was exchanged for political hectoring. At last the need for a Reformation was made decisive. Protest and remonstrance had been offered in vain. The English Church and nation alike were forced to vindicate their rights, by definitely rejecting pretensions which it had become impossible to ignore and traitorous to allow.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT

To perceive the tendencies of an age is more difficult for the men who live within it than for the historian reviewing it in after times. Doubtless that is true of our own era ; it was true in a greater degree of the sixteenth century. Means of communication were few. Travel was slow and dangerous. There were no newspapers to focus public opinion. If men favoured ideas opposed to the existing order of things, they were chary of expressing them in conversation. Too often a single incautious sentence had paved the way for its speaker to prison and the block. We have seen that events were moving swiftly towards the Reformation. The national feeling of England on the one hand, the aggression of Rome on the other, each slowly increasing through the centuries, at length had reached

a point where a rupture was inevitable, and only an occasion was needed to bring it about. Yet few external warnings of the approaching conflict could be seen, fewer minds grasped the significance of such signs as there were, and none dared to translate their message into words. There had been long years of preparation for the blow, nevertheless it fell with dramatic suddenness. Throughout the country undefined public opinion realised with growing clearness the necessity for a change. But public opinion can have little practical result until the man and the moment arrive to aid it—until, in other words, a leader of weight places himself at the head of the movement, and a definite event supplies the opportunity for moving.

Neither of these was to be discerned in the earlier years of Henry VIII.'s reign. Last of all men did the king himself seem likely to lead in overthrowing the papal jurisdiction. There was little chance that he would quarrel with the Pope on religious grounds. Henry's religion was an affair of the head rather than the heart, but it inclined him to accept without demur the abstract and spiritual supremacy of Rome. He realised what is meant by the

Catholicity of the Church, and he had not the smallest sympathy with those novel theories about the Church which were beginning to find expression on the Continent. With reference to social changes, he knew that the monastic system called for some reform. But such reform his great minister and ecclesiastic, Cardinal Wolsey, was prepared to carry out. Possibly the changes designed (and partially executed) by Wolsey might not have sufficed to solve the problem represented by the monastic houses, which indeed had become one of great difficulty. But at least, if completed, they would have made some improvement, and they could be carried through without provoking any serious quarrel with Rome. Therefore neither the religious nor the social movements of the Reformation seemed likely to be initiated by Henry. With regard to political action, it was true that Henry's masterful temperament would not incline him to brook interference from a foreign prince, were he Pope or emperor. Yet his relations with the Papacy were cordial enough through the first part of his reign, for the simple reason that he was able to impose his will upon the Pope. Eng-

land already had come to the front as one of the great European powers. Its influence was advanced yet further by the consummate skill of Wolsey, who, whatever his merits as an ecclesiastic, was one of the finest foreign ministers that ever have served our nation. Thanks to this fact, what Henry wished, that the Pope had to do. With such an arrangement the king was naturally content; whatever might be the Papal claims on paper, or however in practice they might harass the people of England, Henry was indisposed to quarrel with them so long as they did not interfere in any way with his own designs.

An easy way to secure this was to transfer a large share of the papal authority to his own minister. If Wolsey represented the Pope, the Pope could not disown his actions. If the Pope's representative were the king's minister, his actions would be those which the king willed. Henry succeeded to the throne at the age of eighteen in 1509. Six years later he induced the Pope to make Wolsey a Cardinal. In 1518 the Pope was endeavouring to raise money throughout Europe for a crusade against the Turks—

though no one supposed that any portion of this sum would go further than the Papal coffers. In order to promote this scheme, Pope Leo X. despatched legates to the various countries, and Cardinal Campeggio received orders to proceed from Rome to England. Henry would admit him only on the condition that the same legatine rank was conferred on Wolsey. With some reluctance the Pope yielded; Wolsey became a papal legate, and thereby Henry's faithful servant obtained an authority over the Church which eclipsed that of Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Having by such means neutralised the papal authority in practice, the king was quite ready to uphold it in theory. Open attacks upon it were being made abroad. The German reformer, Martin Luther, had published his famous "theses" in 1517. Three years later he issued a book on "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church," entirely repudiating the Pope's claims. As some return, perhaps, for Leo's submission to his wishes, Henry composed a reply to Luther's treatise, thereby gaining from the Pope the title of *Fidei Defensor* ("Defender of the Faith") which still is borne by the sovereign

of Great Britain.[1] In fact, it seemed as if the king had found a way of combining an outward deference to Rome with a policy which ensured Rome's practical subservience to himself. In these circumstances the chances of a quarrel between them seemed remote. Few had reason to suspect how near at hand the beginning of the Reformation actually was. No one could anticipate the manner of its coming. In 1526 the relations between king and Pope seemed unusually peaceful. By 1535 the whole system of papal jurisdiction in this country had been swept away. Our next task is to see in what manner this complete and startling revolution came about.

Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII. had been married by his father to Katharine, a Spanish princess. He died shortly after the marriage. But Henry VII. was loth to give up either the large dowry of Katharine or the political advantages accruing from the alliance with Spain. He resolved therefore that his son Henry, eleven years old at the time, should be betrothed to his brother's

[1] Under the abbreviations "Fid. Def." it appears upon our coinage.

widow. After much difficulty, a "dispensation" permitting the marriage, in spite of the relationship of the parties, was obtained from Pope Julius II. In the year of his accession (1509) Henry VIII. married Katharine. As time went on, his affection for her diminished, and, after a number of other disgraceful intrigues, he fell violently in love with Anne Boleyn, a lady of the court. With obvious hypocrisy, he pretended to feel conscientious scruples concerning his marriage with Katharine, on the ground that the Pope had acted wrongly in permitting him to wed a sister-in-law. This was true enough, but Henry's "conscience" had not troubled him on the point until he had grown tired of Katharine and desirous of marrying Anne. We have seen already that all matrimonial causes were reckoned as within the Pope's jurisdiction, and to Pope Clement VII. accordingly, in the year 1527, Henry applied for a divorce from Katharine. Wolsey had remonstrated privately, but experience had taught how impossible it was to divert the king from any purpose upon which he had set his heart. His arguments having proved futile, the Cardinal used all his influence to

secure the papal decree which his royal master wished. In this he did not doubt of his success, and his expectations seem to have been shared to the full by Henry himself.

Strange as it may appear to us, but one fact prevented Clement from granting the divorce. True, that to do so would have been to reverse the dispensation, granted as a special favour, by one of his predecessors. True, that Henry's "conscientious scruples" were notoriously a hollow sham. Yet the papal court long since had ceased to be guided by principle. Its decisions were regulated by it own advantage and the price which its suitors were willing to pay. The canon laws concerning marriage had been set aside times without number. The most amazing "dispensations" had been issued, when the issue of them was to the gain of the papal court. Clement was a personal friend of the king's, by whom in earlier days he had been offered the See of Worcester. More potent than such a personal obligation was the knowledge that to refuse Henry would be to offend the ruler of England. That was a risk which, in the interests of

the Papacy, it was very desirable to avoid. A divorce might cause public scandal, but public scandal was less dangerous than the rage of Henry VIII. No less than by Clement were these facts appreciated by Wolsey and the king. On more than one occasion the Papacy had shown that it recognised the advisability of yielding to Henry's wishes. Despite the difficulty of inducing one Pope to stultify the solemn decision of a predecessor, the appeal to Rome seems to have been made in the full belief that, almost as a matter of course, it would be successful, that Clement would pronounce the marriage with Katharine null and void, and that Henry would thus be set free to wed Anne Boleyn.

Such, we cannot doubt, would have been the result, but for a factor which Henry, strangely enough, seems to have left out of his calculations. Katharine was the aunt of Charles V., king of Spain. And Charles had been elected also to the post of emperor; so that, in addition to being king of Spain, he became king of Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, ruler of the Netherlands and of the County of Burgundy. The political schemes

of the Papacy brought it into collision with the emperor, who, in May 1527, sacked Rome and made Clement his prisoner. In these circumstances Henry found much difficulty in gaining access to the Pope, while the position of the latter, when the king's request reached him eventually, was one of supreme embarrassment. He would have been very glad to grant the divorce, since it was demanded by a king whom he wished to conciliate. Yet at the moment he was the emperor's prisoner, the emperor was Katharine's nephew, and if the Pope consented to her public humiliation, the consequences to himself were likely to be most unpleasant. He wished to please the king; he could not afford to anger the emperor. Of the two, Henry's favour was the more to be desired, but Henry was far off in England, while Charles was there in Rome.

In this unenviable position Clement, naturally enough, tried to temporise. First he assured the king that he would issue the decree for a divorce as soon as he had regained his liberty. Twice at least he seemed on the point of fulfilling the promise, and each time drew back under pressure from

the emperor. Then he appeared to sanction the decision of the matter in England by Wolsey and Campeggio, in virtue of their legatine office. After much delay, the hearing of the case was begun before them in the spring of 1529. Two months later Campeggio disclosed the fact that the Pope, threatened again by the emperor, had allowed these proceedings merely with a view to gaining time. He had given private instructions to Campeggio that the case was not to be decided in England, but to be adjourned until, at some indefinite date, it could be re-heard in Rome. And thereat Henry's patience, at no time a pronounced feature of his character, finally gave way. His wrath fell upon Wolsey, for Wolsey believed throughout that Clement was on the king's side, and had persuaded his royal master to await the papal action with confidence. In this there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. None the less the king felt that he had been duped. His method of avenging himself upon Wolsey was as ingenious as it was discreditable. We have seen already how Henry had compelled a reluctant Pope to confer upon Wolsey the office of legate. But to accept this office was

technically a breach of an Act passed in the reign of Edward III. Availing himself of it, Henry declared all Wolsey's property to be forfeit to the Crown. Nor was this all; the clergy, naturally enough, had recognised Wolsey's legatine authority, which the king's sole wish and influence had procured for him. Thereby they too were adjudged to have disobeyed the same Act, and were compelled to pay a fine of £118,000 to the king. Wolsey's death followed soon upon his disgrace. "If I had served God," he said, "as diligently as I have done the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs."

Since the Pope had shown his inability to grant the divorce, people generally supposed, with much thankfulness, that Henry's projects had met with a final defeat. But this was far from being his own view. If one device for effecting his purpose had failed, another must be employed. If the Pope would not grant the divorce, it must be obtained in spite of the Pope. Already a suggestion had been made by some of the bishops that the king's case in the papal court would be much strengthened by the production of opinions favourable to his side from the chief univer-

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sities of Europe. By dint of judicious pressure or bribery, such opinions would not be difficult to procure. A further development of this suggestion was made by Thomas Cranmer, a private tutor of Cambridge, with whom the king had a chance meeting in the autumn of 1529. Having obtained these opinions, he argued, why should not they be considered all-sufficient? A judgment in accordance with them should then be pronounced by an English court and the claims of the Pope disregarded. Advice to the same effect seems to have been given soon afterwards by Thomas Cromwell, who became the king's chief counsellor after Wolsey's fall. Let the ruler of England boldly overthrow the papal jurisdiction. It was intolerable to have two governing powers in one country, or to permit ecclesiastical rule to fetter the rights of the king. Henry should abolish the Pope's claim to interfere by declaring himself to be the supreme head of the English Church as well as of the English State.

To such advice Henry was very willing to listen. Cranmer was appointed chaplain to the king. Preparations were made for obtaining the opinions of the universities. And,

while this step was taken to secure some sort of justification for annulling his marriage, Henry took others also, of a more momentous kind, in order to make himself free from papal interference, not only with regard to this matter, but for ever. He determined, in fact, to advance his own aims by stirring English patriotism into action. It is true that the nation detested Henry's matrimonial intrigues, and had no wish to see Katharine cast off in order that Anne might take her place. On the other hand there existed, as we have noticed already, an intense hatred of the papal claims. With the king's special cause the people had no sort of sympathy. But when that cause became bound up with an opportunity for getting free from the whole system of Roman interference; when it supplied a chance of deliverance from a thraldom against which one generation after another had made its protest, then, for the sake of such a gain, the English Parliament was ready enough to co-operate with the king. It was not influenced by religious motives. It was indeed hostile to the Church. When its work was done, papal supremacy had been destroyed, but regal tyranny was established in its place.

For two hundred years at least the evils of the connection with Rome had become increasingly manifest. What was less obvious in 1529, but soon would become only too evident, was that to place State and Church alike absolutely under the heel of such a man as Henry VIII. meant simply the exchange of a vexatious interference from without for a brutal despotism within.

Meeting in 1529, Parliament passed its first great anti-papal statute in 1532, when it forbade the payment of "annates"—certain ecclesiastical fees—to the Pope. This Act was confirmed two years later. By the end of 1534 Parliament had prohibited appeals to Rome, declared Henry the "supreme head" of the English Church, compelled the submission of the clergy to the crown, and overthrown the whole system of papal "indulgences" and "dispensations." By these pieces of legislation the breach with Rome was widened past repair. As if to give a finishing touch to its labours, in 1536 Parliament passed an "Act for extirpating the authority of the Bishop of Rome." Thus swiftly fell the blows, thus thoroughly was demolished the whole structure of papal jurisdiction in

England, round which controversy had raged for centuries. The political Reformation movement was complete.

Meanwhile Henry had utilised the measures of Parliament for his own immediate purpose. In 1533 Cranmer had been consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. Two months later he pronounced the marriage with Katharine void. Already the king, in anticipation of the formal proceedings, had privately married Anne Boleyn. At Rome Clement disallowed this marriage, and called on the king to take back Katharine. But his day of power in England was over. He might issue bulls and excommunications; they were simply ignored. And here, with a sense of relief, we may turn aside from the matrimonial intrigues of Henry VIII. That which replaced Katharine by Anne Boleyn was but one of a series. Even in this case we have passed over, of set purpose, some of the more revolting details. But it is necessary to remember how utterly unprincipled were the king's schemes, and how odious they appeared in the sight of the English people. That, none the less, the nation was willing to assist Henry is a striking proof of its eagerness to seize the

first occasion, whether good or bad, which presented itself for ending the political influence of the Pope, with all the evils to which the abuse of that power had given rise.

Certain features of this political movement, which constituted the first phase of the Reformation, remain to be noticed. In the first place, it did not set up a new Church. It simply affirmed the principle that England must manage its own affairs without interference from outside, and it restored to the Archbishop certain powers which had been his originally, and subsequently had been usurped by the Pope. As if to guard against any misrepresentation of their purpose, those who drew up the first great anti-papal Act expressly declared in it that they were "as obedient, devout, Catholick, and humble children of God as any People be within any Realm christened." In the second place, there could not be a more ludicrous caricature than that which endeavours to present Henry VIII. as an ardent Protestant reformer. The repudiation of the Pope's authority involved no change of doctrine. Doctrinal changes, indeed, there were, but they came at a later period and from quite other sources. The final "Act for ex-

tirpating the authority of the Bishop of Rome" was passed, as has been mentioned, in 1536. Three years later Henry himself drew up the "Statute of Six Articles," which enacted that any one denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation should be burnt, and enforced belief also in private masses, communion in one kind, and compulsory celibacy of the clergy. In fact, through all the latter years of his reign Henry VIII. was prepared, with equal readiness, to send people to the stake for either of two reasons :—(1) that they admitted Roman authority, or (2) that they denied Roman doctrine. The man who doubted the dogma of transubstantiation suffered the same fate as the man who claimed any jurisdiction in England for the Pope.

Viewed as a whole, the political Reformation movement may be said to have resulted in a permanent gain and a temporary evil. To have overthrown the papal system in this country, with its corruption, its exactions, its usurpation of rights belonging to the rulers of the English Church, to have established the principle that our Church, while Catholic in the true meaning of the term, had not been, was not, and would not become Roman

Catholic—all this constituted a gain for which we can never cease to be thankful. Henry's conduct indeed does not admit of defence, but while his intrigue was the occasion of the separation from Rome, its real cause was the fact that England had come, with ample reason, to distrust the Papacy and to wish for the overthrow of its power in this country. And the abolition of the Pope's supremacy paved the way for doctrinal changes, for the cleansing of belief from superstition, for a return to the Faith of the Primitive Church of Christ. Even Henry himself worked towards one change within the Church which proved of the greatest value, and it is at least a small compensation for his many brutalities that he determined to have the public services said in English in place of Latin.

The liberation of the English Church and nation from Roman interference was, then, the permanent gain resulting from Henry's action. It involved also, as we have said, a temporary evil. Parliament had obediently carried out the king's wishes, but perhaps it failed to realise at the time what unlimited power it was transferring to him. Soon enough it was made to appreciate the fact, for

the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign was a period of the strongest and most unscrupulous personal tyranny. He had been made complete master of Church and State alike, and he used his powers to the full. Any one suspected of opposing his wishes in the slightest degree, whether statesman, bishop, or peasant, was hurried to the scaffold. Any one daring to hold religious doctrines other than those accepted by the king was burnt as an heretic. It is said that no less than 70,000 persons were put to death in this reign for offences against the laws. No one was safe. The lying report of a single paid spy was sufficient to insure arrest, torture, and death. Every detail of the constitution, every defence of liberty was merged in the king's power, and ceased to be effective save in accordance with his wishes. Parliament existed to pass the Acts which he drafted. Courts and juries had to decide as the king bade them. Each year seemed to make Henry more supreme, and each year he became less scrupulous, more bitter, more suspicious, more impatient of even a shadow of resistance, more ready to send not merely his opponents, but any who conceivably might become his opponents, to

prison and the block. The whole nation groaned under the burden of the royal tyranny.

Inevitably, too, the Church suffered with the rest. Having procured for himself the title of its "supreme head," Henry did not propose to let that title be a nominal one. Convocation, the lawful voice of the Church, was made no more than an unwilling echo of the royal voice. The beliefs and the worship of the Church were to be those which the king chose. If the spoliation of the monasteries would fill his pocket, then the monasteries must be spoiled forthwith. In other ages when a king threatened the liberties of the Church, it could turn for assistance to the Pope. Now that resource was open to it no longer. And indeed Cranmer was no Anselm, to brave the royal displeasure. On the contrary, he was Henry's obsequious servant. It is small wonder if many Churchmen began to despair of the future. They had rejoiced to get free from the pretensions and usurpations of Rome. Yet the escape from that system seemed a doubtful boon if the national Church had but exchanged occasional interference from the Pope for the ceaseless tyranny of

the king. "The English Church shall be free" had been the opening sentence of *Magna Carta*. "The English Church shall be the appanage of the Papacy," had been the counter-theory of Rome. But "the English Church shall be the slave of the king" was Henry's reading of the sentence. And as, year by year, he acted upon this view with increasing vigour, so year by year did the prospects of the Church in England become more overcast.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

We have seen in the last chapter with what startling rapidity the political movement overthrowing the Pope's jurisdiction was carried out by Henry VIII. Not less swiftly did he accomplish the second step of the Reformation—the social movement which destroyed the monastic system. That which had been a prominent feature of the national life for five centuries, in five years was swept out of existence. In 1535 there were, in round numbers, some 600 monasteries, including, for the sake of convenience, nunneries and friaries within the term. They contained about 8000 inmates; the total population of England being not above four millions. They are reckoned to have owned a third of the land and a tenth of the whole capital of the nation. Before the end of 1540 they had

been utterly destroyed. A vast social institution by which, for good or ill, the life of practically every Englishman had been touched at one point or another, was not merely weakened or amended, but simply blotted out. Unlike the political movement, this drastic social change was not effected without fierce opposition. Yet to Henry VIII. opposition was no more than an incentive to speedier modes of action. But—like, in this respect, the political movement—while the change itself was effected with bewildering swiftness, the forces tending towards it had been at work for centuries.

From very early days the influence of the monastic system had been strong in this country. In the north Christianity had spread through the labours of those who went forth from the religious settlements at Iona, Lindisfarne, and elsewhere; in the south Augustine, himself a monk, set before his converts the ideal of a life lived apart from the world and dedicated with special solemnity to the Divine service. Declining in the eighth century, monasticism revived again in the ninth, chiefly through the influence of Dunstan, who had been the abbot of Glas-

tonbury before becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. At the time of the Conquest, about 330 "religious houses" had been founded in England. After that event they increased rapidly, in size and influence as well as in number. Of the many monastic orders, the two greatest were the Benedictines (or, as they were termed from the habits they wore, the "black monks") and the Cistercians, or "white monks." The last-named order owed its existence to the fact that the rule of life observed in the Benedictine houses, strict as it was, was thought by some to be insufficiently rigorous. For this reason, in the year 1132, a number of monks left the Benedictine Abbey of York, were received into the Cistercian order, and began to build the Abbey of Fountains—an illustration of which, in its present ruined condition, forms the frontispiece of this volume.[1]

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries may be called the golden age of English monas-

[1] While the buildings of Fountains were begun in 1132, additions and alterations to them were made frequently, so that each of the four great architectural styles are represented. The tower was completed only a short time before the monastery was dissolved and the buildings laid waste in 1537.

ticism. Opinions have differed, and differ still, as to the worth of the ideal which, when at their best, the monasteries represented faithfully. It is one which may seem to us based upon a misunderstanding of the New Testament; we may feel that our duty is to meet and overcome temptation rather than to run away from it, that the place of the true disciple is in the world, although he is not of the world. Others consider that there is need also of the sequestered, contemplative life; that a certain number of men and women have a special vocation for it, and that St. John, no less than St. Peter, must have his followers to make the Church complete. But, right or wrong in itself, those who held the monastic ideal in the Middle Ages lived up to it with extraordinary zeal. Even yet the notion lingers in the minds of many—and it is fostered by popular songs and pictures—that the monks were a luxurious, easy-going set of men, much addicted to feasting and drinking. If the reader had entered a mediæval religious house with any such expectation, he would have been grievously disappointed by the result. His fare would have been as simple in quality as it was restricted in

quantity. Bread, fish, and small beer, not venison, capons, and malmsey, were served in the refectory, while the fast-days were frequent and rigorously observed. The day began immediately after midnight, when the monks, lantern in hand, met for prayer in the church, unwarmed even in the coldest weather. At daybreak the office of "prime" was said, followed by mass. Then a meeting of all the brethren in the chapter-house was succeeded by another service, called "terce," terce by high mass, and high mass by "sext." Then only, at about a quarter past twelve, occurred the first meal of the day. Another service took place at three, evensong was said later, and "compline" immediately before retiring to rest, while at midnight the round began once more. In the scanty intervals between all these services the monk was hard at work; perhaps in the fields, perhaps in the infirmary, perhaps in the scriptorium transcribing manuscripts, perhaps in the school, teaching children. Even a slight knowledge of the monastic life will suffice to show how stern were its claims, how little chance there was that any one not thoroughly in earnest would enter upon it.

The influence of these religious houses, scattered up and down the country, affected the whole social, as well as the spiritual, welfare of the nation. Through a considerable period learning and art of every kind would have been almost extinct, had it not been for the work of the monks. In days when a large proportion of the parish clergy were quite illiterate, within the abbey and priory men were studying and copying the scriptures, the works of the early Fathers, and literature also of a more general kind. Of this activity of theirs we still have many survivals, in the form of manuscripts written and illuminated with the most exquisite skill. Yet this was but one of the many forms of art and knowledge which were fostered by the monasteries. Architecture, painting, music, and embroidery were also among the pursuits of the monks and nuns. Moreover, one of the larger religious houses would become a centre of activity for all the neighbourhood. Attached to it were a large number of lay workers, and everything required both for them and for the monks themselves would be made within the monastic precincts. This included clothing, tools of every kind, agri-

cultural implements, and domestic furniture. Whether a new aisle was to be added to the church or a new pair of sandals provided for one of the inmates, everything—the plan, the materials, the labour, and the execution of the work—could be obtained without going outside the monastery's borders. Not the least important of such pursuits was that of agriculture. People who visit to-day the ruins of some abbey are wont to remark that its builders chose a very fertile and picturesque neighbourhood in which to place it. But, more often than not, its original surroundings were barren and desolate. The monks themselves brought about the change; they drained the swamp, they irrigated the dry land, they planted trees and hedges, they transformed and improved out of knowledge the whole of the surrounding country, and the results of their labour remain to-day.

In other ways also the influence of the monastic system upon the social life of the nation was very great. Attached to many of the houses were schools, in which a large number of children—not merely those who would eventually become monks and nuns—received their education. Hospitals likewise

formed part of the monastic buildings, and the sick poor for a long distance round one of these houses would come to it for medicine and advice. Nor did any destitute man or woman ever appeal in vain for relief. Of course this method of charity had its disadvantages. We have come to realise that indiscriminate doles are not really a blessing to the poor. The lesson, however, had not been learnt in the Middle Ages, and undoubtedly the religious orders did a vast amount of noble work in relieving cases of genuine distress, even if they encouraged idle vagabonds by their generosity. We must remember how very different then were the conditions of life. Apart from the monasteries, there were no institutions, hospitals, or societies to minister to the needs of the people, nor was there any system of poor-law relief.

In the best age of monasticism, then, there were some 1100 such houses up and down the country. They were homes of real piety and strict life. They kept a high ideal of religion before the eyes of men. They owned large estates, and their actions as landlords and employers of labour were

generally beneficent. Within them, amid days of general ignorance, knowledge, art, and science were preserved and developed. In them travellers found a lodging, from them needy folk obtained food and medicine. There were few people, of any class, who did not come in contact with the religious houses in one way or another—they had relatives within them, or had business transactions with them, or sojourned in them from time to time when they were on a journey. The idea of an England without these numerous monasteries would have seemed unthinkable in the Middle Ages.

But time changes all things, and by the sixteenth century the monasteries had ceased to be beneficial to the national life. Whether they could have been remodelled in such a way as to meet the altered needs of the age is a question not easily answered. Wolsey thought such reform possible, and took certain steps in its direction. But when once Henry VIII. and Cromwell had got to work the question disappeared with the disappearance of the monasteries themselves. In reading books about the monastic system in England, we shall find that two quite distinct questions are

commonly confused, both by those who are the indiscriminate champions of the system and by those who attack it with savage vindictiveness. The two questions are: (1) Was some wholesale reform and readjustment of the system necessary in the days of Henry VIII.? And (2) Were the actions of Henry and Thomas Cromwell, and the methods they employed, of a wise and reasonable kind? Those are, as we have said, two quite separate questions. A candid and unbiased examination of history will probably compel us to answer the first in the affirmative and the second in the negative. Something had to be done. Things could not be left as they were. But nothing can justify that which Henry and Cromwell actually did.

It will be well to notice very briefly some of those changes which by slow degrees had altered the character and lessened the usefulness of the religious houses. Foremost of all must be mentioned a weakening of their spiritual influence. They were not homes of vice. The stories by which those who destroyed them tried to justify their action were, with scarcely an exception, scurrilously false. But undoubtedly a large proportion of the

monasteries gradually declined from the high standard of their founders. They lost in spiritual force as they gained in material wealth. More attention was paid to the management of estates and less to the life of the soul. The strictness of the ancient rules was largely relaxed. Again, the devotional atmosphere of these places was injured by the presence in them of people whose whole outlook was worldly. In return for loans or gifts of money, the right to lodge, and often to live permanently, in the monastery was granted to those who had afforded such financial assistance. Not seldom the men who became inmates under this system were by no means religious; they did not put off their old habits in their new surroundings, and their influence upon the monks was the reverse of beneficial.

Fresh discoveries and the advance of knowledge had made superfluous some of the work which the monasteries had performed in the past. To take an obvious illustration, after the invention of printing there was not the same need for the laborious copying of books by hand. Elsewhere, too, that great intellectual movement known as the "Renais-

sance" was making itself felt. Men were beginning to think and to study for themselves. A revived knowledge of Greek made them familiar with culture which had been hidden for centuries. Some of the leaders of the English Church—men such as Archbishop Warham, Colet (Dean of St. Paul's), and Sir Thomas More, were closely associated with the progress of "the new learning," as it was called. But the new learning failed to penetrate the walls of the monasteries, where the old methods and the old studies were pursued without change. Thereby, of course, the value of the religious houses as an intellectual force was greatly weakened. For centuries they had led the way in matters of learning; now they began to fall short of the standard to be found outside them. So in this, as in other respects, their day of usefulness seemed to be past. Their acquisition of wealth had weakened their spiritual character. The special work done hitherto by them alone began to be supplied from other sources. And in the matter of learning they were averse from any forward movement.

But to describe the monasteries as having lost most of their usefulness is to state but half

the truth. In their relation to the life of the nation they had ceased to do much good; in relation to the life of the Church they had become actively mischievous. We have traced the growth of the papal claims, and seen with what continual resistance they had been met, up to the time when Henry, for his own purposes, swept them away. From very early days, however, the influence of the monasteries was on the side of the Pope. The monastic orders prided themselves on their exclusiveness. They considered themselves to be on a level altogether higher than that of the parochial clergy. In many instances they contrived to place themselves outside episcopal control. Such exemption from the bishop's rule was granted by the Pope to all the Cistercian houses, and to the largest of those belonging to the Benedictine Order. In some instances the bishops were forced to sign humiliating documents, declaring that they had no powers within the monastery, and that the monks owed obedience only to their abbot and the Pope. Obviously the mischief to the Church was great if these large and important bodies of clergy within the monasteries were able to flout the wishes

of the diocesan bishops, and the evil grew as time went on. Frequently the monasteries acquired patronage with the lands they bought, so that the clergy who served the parish churches were monks, and, as such, hostile to the bishop's rule, and staunch supporters of all the papal claims. Nothing is more essential to the welfare of a national Church than that the authority of the episcopate should be maintained. A system which permitted all the most important monasteries to defy this authority could not be continued without making the English Church a house divided against itself.

Such, then, was the problem which presented itself in the sixteenth century. The monks were not vicious, but they were becoming careless, ignorant, engrossed by worldly pursuits. They were generous to the poor, they were good landlords and kindly employers of labour, but they had ceased to command much respect. And the existence of so many "exempt" houses—monasteries, that is, outside the control of the bishops—amounted to a serious danger. How could these difficulties be met? Would it have been possible to effect reforms by which the

good points of the monastic system might have been retained, while the weaknesses were removed? That is a question as to which opinions will always differ. On the other hand, no impartial student of history can maintain that the monasteries might very well have been left as they were.

The need of reform was clearly recognised by Wolsey. As a first step, he determined to close some of the smaller houses, which were involved in financial troubles, and in which the discipline was lax. "Neither God was served nor religion kept" in them, as Wolsey said. He had many precedents for his action. At various dates, from 1379 onwards, unsatisfactory monasteries had been closed, and their incomes given to some educational foundation; in this way Eton, Winchester, King's College, Cambridge, and the Oxford colleges of All Souls', Magdalen, and New College had been endowed. Wolsey obtained authority to suppress forty of the smaller monasteries—of which twenty-four actually were closed—transferring their inmates to some of the larger and better-conducted houses, while their revenues were to be applied to the "Cardinal's College"

at Oxford, afterwards known as "Christ Church." This plan was carried out by Wolsey in 1524, but before long his attention was wholly engrossed by questions of foreign policy. Then came Henry's matrimonial suit, which, as we have seen, brought about the ruin of the great cardinal. Thus his scheme for the reform of the monasteries was never carried beyond its first stage, and we cannot say whether or no it would have proved adequate to meet the needs of the situation had it been completed. Among those employed in the business by Wolsey was Thomas Cromwell, destined to succeed him as the king's chief adviser, and to deal with the religous houses in a very different spirit. Wolsey, despite his ambition and fondness for political intrigue, was a man of sincere piety. Thomas Cromwell was as unscrupulous a ruffian as ever has played a part in the history of England.

In 1535, the papal jurisdiction having been finally overthrown, the attack upon the monasteries began. Doubtless Henry considered them dangerous, since so large a proportion of the monks had been staunch supporters of the Papacy. Men who had not

admitted the authority even of the English bishops were not likely to accept the king as "supreme head" of the Church. To destroy the monasteries would be, therefore, to strike yet another blow at the Pope. But a motive which influenced Henry more directly was his need of money. His own funds were low, the wealth of the monasteries was enormous, and any pretext for stealing this wealth was hailed with eagerness. He was "supreme head" of the Church. Therefore, he argued—doubtless at Cromwell's suggestion—he was the official "visitor" of all the religious houses. This power he delegated to Cromwell, who joined to himself as assistants certain men of notoriously bad character, and set forth upon his "visitation." Its nominal purpose was merely to compile a report upon the condition of the monasteries. But every effort was made, both on this and on the subsequent visitations, to bring about their immediate surrender. The monks and nuns were threatened, browbeaten, or bribed with promises of larger pensions, into giving way at once. They were freely paid to make accusations of bad conduct against each

other. Any scandalous gossip concerning them which could be picked up in the neighbourhood was accepted without inquiry and set down in the report as proven fact. Ready-made "confessions" were drawn up, with the hope that the monks might be terrorised into signing them. When in none of these ways evidence of misconduct could be obtained, the degraded imagination of the commissioners supplied the deficiency. For some centuries their stories were accepted as more or less true, and even to-day there are people who still have a vague idea that the monasteries in the time of Henry VIII. were places of abominable wickedness. But careful investigation, and the discovery of ancient documents, have shown that the accusations of Cromwell and his associates were simply a string of the vilest falsehoods. That the monastic system needed reform, that it was no longer useful or beneficial to the Church, is true. But that the monks and nuns were people of wicked lives is absolutely false.

However, these stories served their purpose well enough. Cromwell professed to have made an inspection of all the smaller religious

houses within three months, and early in 1536 an Act was passed suppressing all those with an income of less than £200 a year. Doubtless it was true that the lesser houses as a class were less well conducted than the larger ones, and at the same time it was easier to induce the abbots who sat in the House of Lords to acquiesce in these suppressions, since they hoped that their own larger monasteries would escape. Under this Act 376 houses were closed. But, having begun to enrich himself in this way, Henry was not content with the £32,000 a year which the suppression of the smaller houses brought him. A similar visitation of the more important monasteries and nunneries was begun soon afterwards. Popular feeling, especially in the northern counties, was deeply stirred against Henry's unscrupulous greed, and a number of rebellions broke out in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. No less than 30,000 men took up arms in the largest of these uprisings, which was known as the "Pilgrimage of Grace." The king pretended to parley with the leaders, and then, having induced them to lay down their arms, punished with the utmost severity all who had taken part in

the movement. Together with the secular leaders, twelve abbots were put to death, and the "Pilgrimage of Grace" served as an excuse for dealing yet more hardly with the religious houses. The pretence of waiting for Acts of Parliament before destroying them was abandoned. The Act of 1536, in suppressing the smaller houses, had explicitly stated that in the larger ones "religion is right well kept and observed." Now these words were simply ignored. The process of suppression went on until every monastery and nunnery in the kingdom had been destroyed, its inmates turned adrift, its buildings spoiled, its treasures confiscated, much of its wealth given as bribes to those who had connived at its overthrow, and the balance paid into the royal exchequer. It has been reckoned that the king received in all not less than thirty-eight million pounds, according to the modern value of money, from this source.

Nor was the actual money lost the worst feature of the dissolution. Buildings of incomparable beauty were broken down, even the lead of the roofs and gutter-pipes being sold. Occasionally the abbey or priory church survived, although the rest of the monastic

buildings were shattered. Sometimes—as at Tewkesbury and Malvern—the people of the neighbourhood combined to purchase the church from the hands of the spoilers. But that which remains to-day is an insignificant remnant in comparison with what was destroyed. And manuscripts of priceless value were torn to shreds, antique church plate melted down, altar-hangings and vestments given away to be used as cushion-covers or bed-curtains. The treatment of the monks and nuns was what might have been expected of Cromwell. Several of the chief abbots were butchered after a mere pretence of a trial; thus memoranda in Cromwell's own hand (which still exist) give directions that the abbots of Reading and Glastonbury are "to be tried and executed." Of the 8000 inmates, about one-half appear to have been assigned some sort of pension; the rest were reduced to beggary. With them suffered some 60,000 dependents — men, women, and children who had lived on the monastery estates and had been in the employment of the religious houses. No provision was made for these; they were simply turned adrift, to beg or to starve. By such ruthless

methods was the dissolution of the monasteries carried on apace. It had begun in the autumn of 1535. On March 23, 1540, Waltham Abbey, the last of the religious houses, was surrendered.

Thus fell the monastic system, which even before the Conquest, and in an increasing degree since, had played so important a part in the social life of the nation. And this sweeping social change constituted the second great movement of the Reformation. Effected, like the political change, from most unworthy motives, the ultimate result, as in the former case, was beneficial. In the past the monasteries had done splendid work, but they had outlived their usefulness, and a social institution which is no longer useful soon becomes actively dangerous. Nor is it easy to see how Wolsey's scheme of reform, or any other, could so have improved the monastic system as to make its continued existence desirable. Whatever changes might have been made, they could not have touched the root-idea from which the system grew; and that idea was a hard-and-fast division of life's territory into "sacred" and "secular" provinces. Any such division, as we have learnt to understand,

is a mistake, for every part of human life has been consecrated by the Incarnation. Yet if, for this and for other reasons, we feel it was well that the monasteries should go, none the less we cannot remember without horror and shame the method of their destruction. No ultimate good accruing from the change can excuse the barbarous cruelty with which the change was made, or the rapacious greed from which it sprang. And of these we are reminded whenever we visit the remains of some stately abbey or priory. Exquisite as are its fragments of architecture, they can give us but a faint idea of the building's magnificence, within and without, when it stood there at the beginning of Henry VIII.'s reign. Such a ruin brings a double message from the past. It speaks of days when men gave freely of their best to God, but not less does it tell of the dark time when human avarice triumphed, laying waste in a few weeks the achievement wrought by the patient love and skill of centuries.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

THE political and social movements sketched in the previous chapters had not involved any change in the religious beliefs of the English Church. Monasticism had fallen because Henry VIII. had been entrusted with despotic power, and this power had been conceded to the king because the nation was willing to prevent any further interference in its affairs from the Pope, who had become in effect an Italian prince. Thus in England the Reformation began with the assertion of national independence. Religious changes came later, and the previous overthrow of the papal jurisdiction made them easier. Meanwhile the Reformation had been in progress on the Continent also—especially in Germany and Switzerland—but there it had begun at the other end. First had come an attack upon the religious errors of Rome, then the break-

ing away from the papal allegiance. It is necessary to bear in mind this difference in the order of events if we are to understand the real course of the Reformation in our own country. Both Henry VIII. and Martin Luther, the great Continental reformer, attacked the Pope, and both were excommunicated by him. But Luther was excommunicated because he denied the religious doctrines which the Pope believed, Henry because he repudiated his jurisdiction. King and reformer agreed in attacking the Papacy, yet Luther had as little sympathy with Henry's matrimonial project as Henry had with Luther's religious views. Nothing can be further from the truth than the fancy picture, sometimes given us in school histories, of Henry and Luther working together to establish Protestantism.[1] First a political and social change, then a religious reform, was the sequence of events in England; first a religious revolt, then a political breach with the Papacy, was the order in which things happened on the Continent.

[1] "Protestantism" is used throughout this book in its historic sense—*i.e.* to denote the doctrines originating with the Continental Reformers—not, as it has since been employed, to signify all Christian belief outside the Roman Catholic Church.

The reason for dwelling upon this point is that the order of events here and abroad led to very different results. From the point of view of our Church, there is every reason to be glad that in England the political movement preceded the religious. For when Luther and his followers had separated from Rome they found themselves outside their Church, and were compelled to found a new religious body as the home of their doctrines—a body which, whatever its merits as a moral force, was a human invention, and could not claim to be a part of the Catholic Church of Christ. In England, as we rejoice to know, no such innovation was made. First had come the overthrow of the papal jurisdiction, but this left the constitution of the English Church unchanged. As before it had its bishops, its duly-ordained clergy, its council, called "Convocation," by means of which the Church's voice could be expressed. When the time had come to purify its doctrines from the errors which had crept into them in the course of centuries, the process could be carried out by the Church itself, without any loss of its Catholicity, and without reference to the Pope, whose power in England already had been

abolished. In a word, on the Continent the course of events in the sixteenth century led to the formation of new religious bodies; in England to the Reformation of the historic Church.

As no new Church was founded, so the ideal of the earlier and more moderate Reformers was not to put forward a new religion, but to return to the ancient ways by cleansing the Primitive Faith from false ideas and superstitions which had grown over it during the Middle Ages. Chief among them were the doctrines of "transubstantiation" in the consecrated Elements at Holy Communion—a doctrine quite distinct from that of the "Real Presence" of Christ in this Sacrament, which has been held by the Church from the first—the withholding of the Cup at Holy Communion from the laity, the worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Roman belief in "Purgatory," escape from which was to be won for the souls of the righteous by the mechanical saying of a certain number of Masses, superstitious veneration of saints and their supposed relics—practices and doctrines, in short, which were unknown to the Early Church, and had grown up partly through human credulity, and partly through the gain which they brought to the clergy.

For a long time such teaching had been accepted without much question. But with the spread of knowledge there came a change. No longer was it enough to say that this or the other doctrine, or piece of ceremonial, was a tradition of the Church; men began to ask upon what the tradition rested, and how far the doctrine was in accord with Scripture. As the growth of national feeling had paved the way for the overthrow of the papal jurisdiction, so the results of "the new learning" tended, when they reached this country and reacted upon the English character, to intellectual independence. There was no desire to change the religious belief of the Church for the mere sake of change, or in order to emphasise the political separation from Rome. But the English mind was quickened into activity. No more would it believe things merely on trust. Doctrine and ceremonial must be able to make good their claims to acceptance. And the Bible was not to be expounded with a view to substantiating the doctrines, but the doctrines must loose their place unless it could be shown that they were in accord with the Bible.

Such, roughly, was the national temper which made possible the intellectual and

religious movement of the Reformation. There had been symptoms of such a change in the past; indeed, the whole three Reformation movements — political, social, and religious — had been foreshadowed towards the close of the fourteenth century in the teaching of John Wyclif. This remarkable man has received a good deal of indiscriminate praise from people who, without much knowledge of the views actually put forward by him, are aware that he questioned the papal authority, and for this reason alone hail him as a champion of the English Church. Some of the doctrines, however, which he advocated strike at the whole being of the Church, and were rightly condemned as mere heresies. Again, while he argued against "transubstantiation," he did so on philosophical rather than on theological grounds. He disputed the truth of the formula in which mediæval thinkers had tried to embody the doctrine of the Eucharist, but he replaced it by another formula quite as unsatisfactory, and even less intelligible. On the other hand, he has earned the undying gratitude of the English people by his translation of the Bible, which formed the basis of all subsequent versions,

while, living in the fourteenth century, he set forward principles the truth of which was recognised in the sixteenth century—namely, that the claims of the Pope were unjustified, and that the Bible must be the ultimate basis of doctrine. These truths were not less important because he combined with them a number of errors.

Wyclif has been termed the "day-star of the Reformation." The title is so far apt in that he anticipated the necessity for some of the changes which it brought about, yet the direct result of his life was rather to delay than to accelerate the advent of those changes. Together with his views on religious subjects he held others concerning the ownership of property which were, to apply a modern name to them, of a socialistic character. The publication of his writings was followed, in 1381, by the "Peasants' Revolt," and in the eyes of most people they were linked together as cause and effect. This belief was, as a matter of fact, erroneous; between the rebellion and the writings of Wyclif there was no real connection. Yet the alarm caused by the outbreak caused the "Lollards," as Wyclif's followers were named, to

be regarded with dislike by the upper classes. People did not distinguish between his theological and his socialistic views; Wyclif upheld socialism; socialism was the principle of the "Peasants' Revolt," and therefore all the writings of Wyclif, even his translation of the Bible, must be considered dangerous and subversive of property, peace, and order. Such was the simple reasoning of the time. So it was that the cause of ecclesiastical and doctrinal reform became unpopular through its association with Wyclif; so it happened, by a curious irony, that this man, who saw with remarkable discernment the need of reforms, was himself the chief agent in delaying those reforms for a century and a half.

Among the poorer classes some trace of Wyclif's teaching may have survived to the days of Henry VIII. But in any case its influence was small. Relics of Lollardism possibly may have helped to reconcile the masses to the religious changes of the sixteenth century, but if they did so much—which is doubtful—they did no more. Not from a revival of Wyclif's teaching, but from quite other sources, came the impetus which brought to pass the change. It was due

ultimately to that revival of learning which we have mentioned already, and immediately to religious views which originated abroad, and thence found their way into this country. While the political and social changes had been in progress here, the new doctrines of Protestantism had made much headway on the Continent. Gradually they began to affect English thought. Yet Protestantism, as taught on the Continent, could never be taken over bodily as the religion of England. With elements of truth it included much that was clean contrary to all Church teaching. To have adopted it in its entirety would have been to make the English Church a mere sect. And therefore this foreign influence, while useful in helping our Church to cleanse itself from superstition, was also full of danger. After the political and social movements of the Reformation were complete, the task before the English Church was that of purifying its doctrine, of incorporating in its beliefs whatever truth had been brought to light by the religious Reformation on the Continent, yet not less of rejecting any changes which would alter its character as a branch of the One Catholic and Apostolic

Church of Christ. It was not an easy task, and it was not accomplished speedily, nor without mistakes.

Protestantism on the Continent had been developed along two main lines—the one originating with the German ex-monk, Martin Luther, the other with the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli. On some points the two agreed. They united in rejecting the papal claims, in denying Transubstantiation, in exalting the Bible as the rule of faith, irrespective of any Church authority. They differed in their Sacramental views—Luther believed the doctrine of the Real Presence, while Zwingli denied it—and in other important matters. So strong was the dissension between them, that on one occasion of their meeting Luther refused to take Zwingli's hand, saying, "You are of a different spirit from us." And each of their bands of followers soon split up into a number of other bodies. Not even in their original forms could the doctrines of Luther or Zwingli have been accepted without great modification by any branch of the Church. But before long the Swiss parties, which traced their origin to Zwingli, began to deny almost every doctrine

which the Church regards as fundamental, including those of the Christian Sacraments and ministry.

So long as Henry VIII. was on the throne, neither Lutheran nor Zwinglian doctrines had any direct influence upon the Church of England. Luther's writings had a certain circulation in this country, and Zwingli's principles were taught in the notes to a translation of the Bible made in 1526 by William Tyndale, copies of which were smuggled over to England from Worms, where it was composed. Thus it came about that the doctrines of Continental Protestantism were made known and gained a number of secret adherents, including some of the bishops. But the men who felt drawn in any way to the teaching of Luther or Zwingli had every reason for concealing their opinions. Henry had gained for himself the title of "supreme head" of the Church, and he intended to act up to it. In early days he had written a book to attack Luther, and his opinions on this point did not change in later times. In fact, for the whole Protestant movement he had the strongest antipathy. If any man betrayed any sympathy with it,

whether he were a Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist, or "Anabaptist," he was, in Henry's eyes, a heretic, and as such to be brought to trial and burnt, unless he were willing to make a full recantation. In a previous chapter we have seen how thorough was the royal tyranny towards the close of Henry's reign. He was the head of the Church; the Church's views were to be those which he approved, and any one who differed from them was to be condemned forthwith. In addition to many who were led to recant, fully thirty people were put to death for heresy by his orders. His Act of the Six Articles made it a capital offence to deny Transubstantiation. Therefore, as has been said, the Protestant Reformation abroad was allowed to have no direct influence upon the Church in this reign. Its principles gained a certain amount of sympathy among all classes, but those who felt it were well advised to keep the fact to themselves. Martin Luther died in 1546 and Henry VIII. in the following year. At that time no doctrinal change of importance had been made in the formal and official beliefs of the English Church. Political and social changes had

been effected; the papal jurisdiction had been abolished and the monasteries destroyed, but the ceremonial of the Church remained what it had been when Henry became king, thirty-eight years earlier.

To delay reform is often to cause revolution. The force of Protestantism was the stronger in the reign of Edward VI. because it had been suppressed so mercilessly in the days of Henry VIII. Indeed, the period that followed was one of danger to Church and State alike. The tyranny of Henry had been oppressive, yet it was preferable to the rule which replaced it, when a group of unprincipled and self-seeking men attempted to use the autocratic power which Henry had secured for the Crown. It is, however, with their ecclesiastical policy alone that we are concerned here. By Henry's will, the government during Edward's minority was entrusted to a council of sixteen members. Apparently his intention had been that the two Church parties—both that which clung to the ancient ways and that which inclined to reform—should be equally represented among its members. Either by a mischance, however, or by tampering with the will, this idea was

not fulfilled. In practice, the party of reform obtained a strong predominance. Gardiner of Winchester, the most prominent of the conservative bishops, was not a member of the Council. Tunstal of Durham, another prelate of similar views, was quickly driven from it. Hertford, better known by his later title of Duke of Somerset, was elected Lord Protector. He was a violent Protestant in his religion. After his fall he was succeeded by the Duke of Northumberland, as incapable a ruler as Somerset, as hostile to the ancient Church of the country, and without Somerset's sincere, if bigoted, convictions to plead as an excuse for his conduct.

Into such hands passed the control of the Church in the days of Edward VI. Henry had gained for himself the title of supreme head of the Church, and therefore the Council, discharging for the time the king's duties, assumed the management of the Church to be among them. Its members seized whatever revenues of the old religious foundations Henry had spared. Somerset himself resolved to destroy Westminster Abbey, wishing to utilise its stone for the building of his own palace. Bought off by the dean and chapter

with a bribe of twenty manors, he fell upon a church and three bishops' houses in the Strand. They were thrown down and the building material employed for the construction of Somerset House. But the Protector and his associates were not content merely to pillage the Church. To the "royal supremacy" doctrine of Henry they added the theory —derived from Luther's teaching, but named "Erastianism" after a little-known Swiss reformer, Erastus—which held the Church to be no more than a department of the State. Such was the belief on which the Council acted. It regarded the bishops as its servants. If they failed to carry out its commands, they were deposed and imprisoned. On its own authority it regulated ceremonial, mutilated the churches, issued doctrinal statements, and chose topics on which the clergy were commanded to preach. In fact, loyal Churchmen began to wonder if they had not paid too heavy a price for the separation from Rome. The Pope's interference had been replaced by the tyranny of Henry, and now Henry's powers were being exercised by a group of unscrupulous and fanatical politicians. The Church indeed had fallen on evil days.

And it looked in vain for help to him who should have been the champion of its liberties. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a member of the Council, but he seems to have raised no protest on behalf of the Church against its misdeeds. His religious opinions appear to have undergone a change; always a man easily swayed, he had been strongly influenced by the doctrines of Continental Protestantism. But, apart from this, he was never fitted to be the Church's leader. He was an amiable and a scholarly man. His genius as a framer of prayers for public use has never been equalled. But he had no strength of will, and was ready to defer to whatever authority was pressed upon him. He had been the obsequious servant of Henry. Now he was not less the obsequious servant of Somerset and the Council. They might pillage the Church as they pleased, they might usurp episcopal authority as they chose, but no opposition would come from Cranmer. He was at once as pious a man and as incapable an Archbishop as ever has filled the chair of Augustine.

The rest of the bishops, however, to whichever side they inclined, at least had the courage

of their convictions. Ridley, Barlow, Hooper, and Latimer were among the chief of those who favoured a reform of doctrine more or less on the lines which had been followed on the Continent. They were influenced to a great extent by the teaching of the foreign divines, who, when the sympathies of the Council had been made evident, flocked into this country. In the previous reign this would have cost them their lives; now they found themselves in high favour. One of them, Peter Martyr, was given a professorship at Oxford, another, Bucer, held a similar position at Cambridge. The result of their teaching was doubtless of a twofold kind. On the one hand, they gained many adherents for the cause they represented. They enabled their hearers to understand the aims of the Reformers abroad, and their arguments affected many Englishmen of learning, including, as has been mentioned, a number of the bishops. On the other hand, some who listened to them came away not merely unconverted, but realising more clearly than before the gulf between these novel theories and the ancient faith of the Church. Doctrinal reform might be necessary, but to

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abandon any part of its true heritage was a price for reform which the Church had no right to pay. To retain that heritage and yet to accept the tenets of Luther or Zwingli seemed impossible.

While Ridley, Latimer and other bishops were ranged on the side of reform, and were not scrupulous as to the agency by which reform was to be effected, other members of the episcopate were prepared totally to resist the ultra-Protestant Council. Such were Gardiner, and Bonner, Bishop of London. They argued that the royal supremacy over the Church was, by law, the personal prerogative of the sovereign, that it could not be delegated to a body acting on his behalf, and consequently that changes in religious matters should be postponed until Edward had come of age and assumed the rule. But the Council was determined to go its own way. In 1547, the year of Henry's death, it drew up a set of "Injunctions," telling the clergy how they were to perform their duties. Among the commands enjoined on them were those of preaching in favour of the "royal supremacy" at least four times a year, and of seeing that all pictures, shrines, and images in their

churches were destroyed. They were also compelled to accept the book of "Homilies," which Cranmer had composed, although it had not the authority of Convocation. In order to circulate the "Injunctions," and to see that they were observed, a visitation of every diocese was ordered by Somerset. The visitors were men of strong Protestant sympathies, and while they were at work the powers of the bishops were suspended. Gardiner and Bonner refused to acquiesce in this violation of Church liberty, and were sent to prison in consequence.

An injury to Christian art only second to that of the destruction of the monasteries was brought about by the fanatical zeal of the Reformers against "images." They interpreted this term in the widest sense. They tore down exquisitely-carved screens, they smashed stained-glass windows to atoms, they appropriated and melted down church bells and plate. As the influence of the Protestantism imported from the Continent became stronger, as the number of Zwinglians, Calvinists, and Anabaptists in England increased, so did the attack upon the historic Church become fiercer. If the Reformers

had aimed merely at cleansing the doctrine of the Church from Roman errors they would have performed a real service. But they went much further. Under pretence of reforming the Church, they wished to overthrow its whole system. While they failed in this, they succeeded in reducing it to a state of anarchy. Bishops who would not countenance the new movement were deposed or imprisoned. Some dioceses were left without a bishop, the executive work being done by a government agent who pocketed the revenues. Some men were made bishops who disbelieved entirely in the order of the episcopate. Patrons of Protestant sympathies nominated their gardeners or gamekeepers to fill the livings in their gift. Foreign preachers declaimed against "Catholicism" up and down the country; German troops were hired to shoot the people of Devonshire who rose in revolt against the Council and its methods. So matters went from bad to worse. After the fall of Somerset, the Church and State alike fared no better under the rule of Northumberland. Edward VI.'s unhappy reign lasted but six-and-a-half years. But

by the close of it the whole work of the Reformation seemed likely to be undone. In its earlier stages it had been carried through because the nation, generally speaking, was favourable to the changes made. At the death of Henry VIII. people were prepared for cautious alterations in the doctrine of the Church. At the death of Edward the violence of the Reformers had made the whole cause of reform odious in the eyes of Englishmen. They began to think that the Reformation was a huge mistake. Better the old condition of things, they felt, even if it involved the Pope's supremacy, than that the Church of their fathers should be handed over to the rule of such men as Somerset and Northumberland; better the old belief, however tinged with superstition, than the barren creed of the Continental religious teachers.

Against the many injuries which the English Church received in these gloomy years can be set one solid and permanent gain. For it was in the reign of Edward VI. that the first English Prayer-book was published —that Prayer-book which at various later dates has been revised but never superseded,

and is still, by reason of its dignity combined with simplicity, its charm of language, its lucid arrangement, and its store of intense devotional feeling soberly expressed, a possession of inestimable value to our Church. The story of the Prayer-book is so large a subject that we can deal with it here only in the barest outline. For a more detailed study of its growth and contents the reader can be referred to a companion volume in this series.[1] Our present task must be merely to trace the influence of the Prayer-book upon the Reformation.

A wish to make English, instead of Latin, the language of public prayer had been felt strongly by Henry VIII. Before his death a translation of the Litany had been published for use in churches. In 1547 Convocation decided that the chalice should no longer be withheld from the laity in Holy Communion, but that they should receive "in both kinds." In 1548 an English and Latin Missal appeared, giving effect to this change. And in 1549 was published the first Prayer-book, complete save for the

[1] "The Story of The Prayer-book," by the Dean of Carlisle.

"ordinal"—*i.e.*, the services for ordaining priests and deacons and consecrating bishops. These were published separately in the following year. In the main the Prayer-book was composed of translations from the old Latin service-books, together with material derived from Lutheran sources and a number of original compositions, mostly due to Cranmer. And thus it stood midway between the old forms and the sweeping doctrinal changes desired by the extreme reformers. Generally speaking, the services were made much more simple, intelligible, and congregational than they had been previously. An effort was made also to get rid of merely superstitious rites which had grown up under Roman influence, and to return to scriptural and primitive ways. It is well worth while to study Cranmer's preface — standing second in our present Prayer-book, and entitled "Concerning the Service of the Church." It defines clearly the principles which guided the compilers in performing their task.

Taking as it did a middle course between two extremes, the Prayer-book was certain to meet with severe criticisms, both from those

who were averse from any religious changes and from those who thought that the changes made by it were insufficient. In particular, it was attacked fiercely by the extreme reforming party, who wished to break entirely with Catholic tradition. This was the view that found most favour with the Council, and Cranmer himself seems to have inclined more and more strongly to ultra-Protestant opinions. Accordingly, the Prayer-book of 1549 had scarcely been issued before steps were taken to revise it on lines which would be likely to win the approval of the extreme Reformers. This revision was published in 1552. It contained a great number of changes from the first book; most significant were those made in the Office of Holy Communion. The new wording represented it as a mere memorial rite rather than as a Sacrament conferring grace upon those who receive it worthily. Yet, sweeping as these alterations were, they failed after all to satisfy the Protestant extremists, who attacked the second Prayer-book not less severely than the first. Cranmer had done his best to meet their views. The Council had added, on its own authority and in a quite illegal way,

what was called the "black rubric" to the Communion Service—the declaration about kneeling which, with one important alteration,[1] is still printed in the Prayer-book at the end of this service. But the fact was becoming more evident each year that nothing less than the destruction of the English Church as a Church, and the creation of a new Protestant body in its place, would satisfy the extremists. Their chance of success, however, ended with the death of Edward. Even the second Prayer-book was given no real ecclesiastical authority, was in force only for a few months, and in many parts of England was not used at all.

One other attempt to find room for the new doctrines in the old Church was made by Cranmer. In 1553 were published forty-two "Articles of Religion," which, with important changes, and reduced in number to thirty-nine, are still in use. The hostile reception given to the Prayer-book of the previous year seems to have convinced the Archbishop that no possible concessions would satisfy the extremists. Therefore he em-

[1] *i.e.* in its first form the Black Rubric denied the "Real Presence" of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. When re-inserted in the year 1662 the word "Corporal" was substituted for "Real."

bodied in these Articles the doctrines which the Church held and had no right to modify. He expressed them in the widest possible terms. He valued rightly the comprehensiveness of the English Church, and wished to keep the reformers within its ranks. But to comprehensiveness there must be limits, and those who could not accept even the moderate statements of the Articles must find their religious home elsewhere than in a branch of the Catholic Church. Such was the conviction to which he had been led by his recent experience; well for the Church would it have been had he recognised the truth some years earlier. His attempt to check the extremists came too late. These bigoted and intolerant men had almost undone the cause of the Reformation. They had caused the English people to regard Protestantism with disgust. They brought to pass a violent reaction in favour of Rome.

For the Articles were hardly in print before the illness of the young king was known to be mortal. Northumberland made a desperate grasp for the power which was slipping from his hands. He persuaded the dying king, for the sake of Protestantism, to set aside Henry VIII.'s will, under which Mary would

succeed to the throne, and to bequeath it to Lady Jane Grey, who had married Northumberland's third son. The sick boy gave way, the new will was made, and Cranmer—reluctantly, but incapable as ever of resisting pressure—was among those who ratified it by their signatures. But the plot was futile. Its promoters had left out of their calculations the force of public opinion. And of Protestant rule in general and of Northumberland's use of power in particular the English nation had tasted more than enough. They had proved themselves to mean pillage of the Church, anarchy in its government, bitter attacks upon its historic doctrines, heavy taxation, and mismanagement of the nation's affairs at home and abroad. Of Protestantism and Protestant rule, therefore, England was resolved to be rid. Edward died on July 6. On July 10 Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed queen in London. By July 21 her cause was lost, and Northumberland lay a prisoner in the Tower. On August 3 Mary entered London, and never perhaps in English history has the advent of a sovereign to the throne been hailed with a more general or more passionate enthusiasm.

CHAPTER V

THE ROMAN REACTION

Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII. and Katharine of Arragon, held strongly the religious convictions which had been those of her parents. Her education had trained her to look upon every form of Protestantism as heresy, and her experience since her father's death had filled her with a quite justifiable dislike of the Protestants. Because she remained faithful to the unreformed religion she had been subjected to insults and persecution at the hands of the Council. But now that she was queen of England, no one could doubt that the work of the Council, and all the religious changes made in the reign of Edward, would be undone. This fact caused the nation as a whole a feeling of sincere joy. We have noticed already how the violence and bitterness of the Reformers defeated its

own ends. Moreover, precisely the same factor which had enabled Henry to overthrow the papal supremacy was now ready to help in undoing the work of Protestantism. This factor was the growth of national feeling. England had come to resent the interference of foreigners in its concerns. Therefore it supported Henry in his political quarrel with the Pope. But foreign interference, in another form, proved quite as characteristic of the religious movement which followed in the days of Edward. Hundreds of Continental divines streamed into England with the object, apparently, of making the national Church resemble one of their own sects. In a domineering spirit they laid down the law as to what should be the beliefs and ceremonial of England. They scoffed at practices which centuries of use had made dear to the people. So the national spirit which had come to resent papal dictation resented no less the intrusion of these Protestant teachers. It welcomed Mary's advent to the throne because her accession brought the triumph of the foreigners to an end, and sent them flying across the sea to their own lands. Early in this reign not less than 800 hastened out of

England, and with them went numbers of Englishmen, including five bishops, who had been won over to strong Protestant views. They felt that England under Mary Tudor was no safe place to be in. They migrated to Strasburg, Frankfort, Basle, Geneva, and other continental towns, where they imbibed still further the doctrines of the Protestant sects.

Such on Mary's accession was the fate of the extreme Protestant party, which wished the Reformation in England to be carried through on the same lines as the Reformation in Switzerland. When this party had fallen, however, two others remained, and for six months it was doubtful which would receive royal support. On the one side were those wholly opposed to the "new learning," who still favoured the papal claims, and hated alike every change made under Henry and Edward. This was the Romanist party. On the other side were those who were in favour of the Reformation on the lines laid down in the first Prayer-book. They were glad to be free from papal interference, but they were not less anxious to safeguard the true Catholicity of the English Church. This may be

termed the English party, inasmuch as it desired to proceed, by constitutional methods, to preserve the independence of the national Church which Henry had gained, to eliminate Roman errors from its doctrine, but to reform it in a cautious and conservative spirit, preserving its continuity with the ancient Church of the country. Such considerations had no weight with the extreme Protestant reformers. Their day, however, was over. But whether Mary would act in accordance with the views of the Romanist or English party was for some time a matter of uncertainty.

To win her support for the English party was the great desire of Bishop Gardiner, who, with four other bishops imprisoned by the Council, had been liberated and restored to office at the beginning of the new reign. Cranmer, being implicated in the Lady Jane Grey rebellion, was attainted of treason in October 1553, and for the three following years the see of Canterbury was vacant. On Gardiner, however, the office of Chancellor was bestowed; he stood high in the queen's favour, he was her chief adviser in ecclesiastical affairs, and it seemed for a time as if the policy advocated by him would prevail.

He, with those who shared his views, hoped that she would maintain England's independence of the Pope or any other foreign power, marry an Englishman, and be content in Church matters with restoring the state of things which had existed in the days of Henry.

It seemed for some months that these hopes would be fulfilled. Mary declared herself averse from persecution, and granted pardons with a free hand. Parliament was satisfied with repealing the legislation of the previous reign — including, of course, the Acts authorising the use of the Prayer-book. But no reference was made to the Pope; his claim to supremacy was not cited as the reason which justified the changes, and indeed the title of "supreme head" of the Church was still used by the queen. And it is remarkable that throughout this period, when Gardiner's influence was at its height, there were no burnings of "heretics." The fact is noteworthy, since to Gardiner has often been assigned a large share of the blame for the horrible religious persecution which ensued in the later part of this reign. So, for a while, the prospect seemed fair.

Mary had not to gain the favour of her people by slow degrees, but only to retain her place in their affection. Whatever her personal qualities, she was doubly welcome as their ruler. England was once more governed by a monarch, in place of a despicable Council, and the national religion no longer was deformed at the bidding of foreign sectaries. Some thoughtful Churchmen might regret the Prayer-book of 1549, but few or none had any affection for its successor of 1552. They might feel that the reaction had gone rather far. They might question at heart the wisdom of an indiscriminate return to Henry VIII.'s religious position. Still, continental Protestantism was overthrown, the Catholicity of the Church was assured without a reunion with Rome, and the necessary reforms could be made in time. And meanwhile there was ample cause for content.

Unfortunately, this hopeful state of affairs was not destined to last for long. Soon Gardiner was made to realise that he was fighting a losing battle; that it was not the English but the Romanist party which would gain the day. If Mary's father was, with all his faults, an English patriot, her mother was

a Spanish princess. And Mary, a Spaniard herself in her sympathies, resolved to wed Philip of Spain. This decision, made in the teeth of Gardiner's pleading, struck the death-blow of her private happiness and her public success. The feeling which had enabled Henry to fulfil his plans, the feeling which had caused Mary's accession to be hailed with boundless enthusiasm, was, as we have seen, that of national independence, which with the people of England had become one of passionate intensity. To marry a Spanish ruler was to outrage that feeling, and to shatter her hold upon the affections of her subjects. It meant a Spanish domination over England; it meant not less certainly a renewed subjection of the English Church to the Pope. This prospect was odious to the nation. The announcement of the match provoked general discontent. In the south an armed rebellion broke out, headed by Sir Thomas Wyatt. Quickly put down, it served as an excuse for the imprisonment of Elizabeth, Mary's sister, and the execution of the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, who was as little responsible for this rising as she had been for Northumber-

land's mad attempt to place her on the throne. Wyatt's rebellion, however, was rather of a religious than a political complexion. He had resolved to utilise the intense unpopularity of the Spanish match in order to effect his real purpose, which was to reintroduce the Protestantism of Edward's reign. And for this the English people had no inclination. Probably Wyatt's true motive was more obvious than he imagined. His insurrection failed, and with its failure vanished the last hope of turning Mary from her purpose. Hateful as it was to the English party, they could oppose it no longer when the alternative was presented to them as a fresh triumph for the Edwardine religion. Much as they disliked foreign intrusion, to have averted the coming of Philip of Spain would have been no gain if the price paid for keeping him out was the letting in of swarms of Protestant teachers from Germany and Switzerland. Thus Wyatt's action took the heart out of the opposition of the English party to the royal marriage. They resigned themselves to the inevitable, and in July 1554 the queen and Philip were married by Gardiner.

That marriage meant the reinstatement of the Papacy in England, and the undoing of the whole work of the Reformation—the part of it effected by Henry as well as those later religious changes of Edward's time, which had been nullified already. Gardiner, and those who thought with him, realised this quite clearly. And when the expected change came to pass; when Parliament annulled all the anti-papal acts of Henry's reign; when a papal legate, Reginald Pole, arrived in England; when the nation was "absolved" with much ceremony and brought back into full communion with Rome—then all this was done without opposition from Gardiner and the others of his party. Hence they have been described as "traitors," as "secret allies of the Pope," as the "tools of Rome." Such a judgment is utterly unfair. With all his might Gardiner had resisted Mary's policy. Until Wyatt's foolishness made the attempt vain, he had used every effort to prevent her marriage with Philip. He was no friend of the Pope's supremacy, which in Henry's days he had helped largely to overthrow. For some time he had been successful in

keeping Pole, the papal legate, out of England. He, and the English party with him, had done all that was possible—and failed. Mary and Philip were wedded. The Pope's legate had arrived, and superseded Gardiner as the head of ecclesiastical affairs. Parliament—the members of which in the days of the Tudors were elected rather as the sovereign chose than as the people willed—had carried out the royal commands. The Pope again was the recognised head of the English Church. What line of action could Gardiner and his friends adopt?

Practically but two courses were open to them. The one was to bring about a revolution, with the hope of driving Mary from the throne and of putting Elizabeth there in her stead. Such an attempt might or might not have succeeded. The chances were decidedly against it. And to plunge the country into the horrors of a civil war was not a step to be taken lightly. Supposing the revolution were effected, what would be the gain? It would simply mean, as Wyatt's rebellion had shown, that the extreme Protestant faction would control the Church

once more. Year by year its members were becoming more fanatical and violent. Their aim could be described no longer as merely a reform, however rigorous, of the English Church. They wished to destroy every trace of its true character and to make it a sect. The rule of Geneva and the Swiss divines was to replace that of Rome and the Pope. Clearly it was not worth while to create a revolution if, in the doubtful case of its success, such were to be its fruits. Therefore Gardiner and his party had perforce to make the best of the situation in which they found themselves. No doubt it was unsatisfactory enough. The Spanish domination was an insult to their patriotism, the papal triumph was a blow to their churchmanship. But they hoped to minimise Philip's influence in politics, while in submission to papal rule for a time at least lay the only hope of preserving the fundamental doctrines of the Church. They had not the least desire to be Roman Catholics. But they would rather be Roman Catholics than cease to be Catholics at all.

Thus the reign of Mary entered upon its second phase. From the time of the marriage,

Gardiner, who died in November 1555, was relegated to the background, and Pole, succeeding to the archbishopric of Canterbury after Cranmer's execution, became the guiding influence of the Church. Thus far Mary had triumphed in her plans; she had married Philip, she had undone the whole work of the Reformation, she had brought to pass a formal reunion with Rome. Had she been content with this success, it might well have been permanent. But again this infatuated woman took the one step which was quite certain to ruin the cause she had at heart. The fanaticism of the Edwardine Reformers had made the English people abhor the Protestant cause. Now the insensate cruelty of Mary was to create a national dread and hatred of Romanism which even now, four and a half centuries later, are by no means extinct. Having set up again, as she believed, the standard of the true faith in her country, she determined to extirpate from it every trace of heresy. And this resolve, translated into practice, meant that in four years—from 1555 to 1558—nearly 300 persons were burnt to death for their religious opinions. Parliament had re-enacted the heresy laws in 1554, but it can

have been little prepared for the use to which they would be put.

Attempts have been made to clear Mary, at least in part, of the blame for these hideous acts of persecution. Little, however, can be urged on her behalf. Modern research has swept away the old belief—due to Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," a grossly inaccurate volume—that Bishops Gardiner and Bonner were the real instigators of these atrocities. Nor has the view which fastens the blame on Pole any historical weight. It is much more likely that the Spanish ecclesiastics who came to this country with Philip were partly responsible, familiar as they were with the methods of the Inquisition in their own land. But even if the suggestions came from them, it was the queen who carried them out. It is true, of course, that human life was much more lightly regarded in the sixteenth century than it is in the twentieth. And it has been pointed out that if Mary killed the "Protestants," Elizabeth, when her turn came, did the same by the "Papists." Yet—apart from the fact that two wrongs do not make a right—the difference between the conduct of Mary and Elizabeth was enormous. Those who

suffered death in the reign of Elizabeth did so not as heretics but as traitors. They were condemned because they were actively abetting a plot which had the assassination of the queen as its object. The throne was in real danger through their machinations. No excuse of this kind could be urged by Mary. Her position was perfectly secure. Doubtless some of the Protestant fanatics used violent language and were guilty of gross irreverence. But there was no combination among them of a political kind. Cranmer—unwillingly enough—had sided with Lady Jane Grey, but he was put to death not as a traitor but as a heretic. Hooper, Ridley, and Latimer were not politicians. And the great majority of the 300 martyrs were illiterate peasants, of no influence, and incapable of injuring seriously either Church or State.

With Mary, then, rests the responsibility for the tragic record, and the explanation of her conduct which seems at once the most probable and the most charitable is that her mind was unhinged by her misfortunes. She was bitterly disappointed with her husband, who returned to his own country. Mary's love for him had been genuine, whereas he

had entered into the match merely for the sake of political advantages. The child she longed for was not born. Her physical health became worse. The war with France in which she engaged resulted in the disgraceful loss of Calais. All these misfortunes the queen looked upon as signs of divine wrath, to be expiated by further human sacrifices. As one blow after another fell, she insisted that heretics should be sought out with greater zeal and bonfires lighted afresh.

We need not dwell at length upon this dark period of English history. The names of some of the principal victims—Cranmer, Hooper, Latimer, and Ridley—have been mentioned above. Against the pitiful cowardice so often shown by Cranmer may be set the facts that he did not, with others of the bishops, seek safety by flight at the beginning of Mary's reign, and that with his last words he repudiated the recantation which, in a moment of weakness, he had been induced to sign. Ridley and Hooper had shown themselves incapable of understanding the real position of the historic English Church, but they faced death with a sublime courage. Not less striking was the

heroism of Latimer—an ardent Reformer, who had resigned his bishopric in consequence of Henry VIII.'s "Six Articles," and since then had combined the championship of his religious principles with bold criticism of the clerical laxity which the spread of those principles had engendered. Bishop Ferrar and Dr. Taylor were others of the victims who held positions of prominence. But the most part of the 300 were, as has been mentioned, persons of no rank or influence, wantonly butchered to satisfy the blood-thirsty mania of the queen. It was indeed but a small boon in comparison with these outrages that Mary restored to the Church some of the revenues confiscated by the Crown in the previous reigns. A few years later her action was reversed by Elizabeth, so that the gain was neither great nor permanent. But, whatever might be Mary's policy in other respects, the horrors of the martyrdoms for which she was responsible engrossed the mind of England. To the very end of her reign they were carried on with increasing ferocity. Soured and disappointed, having turned the love of her subjects into hate, having ruined for ever by her cruelties the cause she had at

heart, having lowered the prestige of the nation and led it to defeat, estranged from all her friends and neglected by her husband, Mary came to her end. On November 10, 1558, the last burnings took place. On November 17 the queen died, and not twenty-four hours later her death was followed by that of Pole. The Roman reaction was over. The ample chance bestowed on Mary of restoring for good the papal supremacy had been flung away. When Elizabeth ascended the throne the religious future of the nation was uncertain enough. But this at least was clear. The flames of the bonfires had done a double work. They had consumed the bodies of their wretched victims, but they had destroyed not less the cause of Romanism. Come what would, a creed in the name of which 300 persons had been burnt to death in four years would never henceforth be accepted as the religion of the English people.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE WAY

It was to a troubled heritage that Elizabeth, in her twenty-sixth year, succeeded. Seldom have the fortunes of either Church or State been at a lower ebb than they were in November 1558. Abroad the unsuccessful French war had lowered England's repute; at home it had depleted the national exchequer. Had any continental power chosen this moment for attack, its success could hardly have been doubtful. Of allies, other than Spain with its doubtful friendship, England had none. Threatening as was the aspect of foreign politics, the internal condition of the country was even worse. The people were seething with social discontent. They had been filled with hopeless despair by religious persecution, they had been taxed beyond reason to provide funds for a campaign which

had resulted only in the loss of Calais and national disgrace. Just at this time a mysterious sickness swept over the land, causing great mortality. Not less clouded were the prospects of the Church. The prevalent illness found a remarkably large number of its victims among the episcopate. Of the twenty-seven English sees, no less than eleven, including that of Canterbury, were vacant by death early in 1559. The surviving bishops had submitted to the Pope, and, for the most part, held strong Romanist views. The bulk of the parochial clergy favoured the cause which in Mary's reign had been vainly championed by Gardiner—the cause of a moderate Church reform, taking its course midway between Roman Catholicism and extreme Protestantism. But extreme Protestantism also had its party. Those who supported it had fled to the Continent for safety at the beginning of the previous reign. There they had mingled with various sects and taken part in the fierce disputes which had broken out between them. On the accession of Elizabeth they hastened back to England, convinced that the hour of their triumph was at hand, and that the ecclesiastical policy of the new queen would

resemble that of Edward's Council. They argued too, not unreasonably, that the sweeping reforms they desired would have a better chance of success now that the leaders of the movement were bishops and clergy of the English Church, and not divines from the Continent.

So, in addition to grave questions of foreign and domestic policy, Elizabeth was called upon to face an acute crisis in the Church. Bereft of a leader, weakened by the deaths of so many of its bishops and ministers, it suffered also from internal discord. Three separate parties within it longed for the mastery—the Romanists, the Anglicans, and the Puritans. (This last term did not come into use until a later period, but it is convenient to employ it at once to describe the new party of English extreme Reformers, as distinct from that which had been led by continental Protestants.[1]) Between these three parties a bitter antagonism existed. The number of Romanists was small, but, as it included the bishops, how could constitutional changes be made against their

[1] The word "Protestant" dates from April 19, 1529, when the Lutheran princes and cities formally "protested" against a decision of the Second Diet of Spires.

wishes? The upholders of a national Church, retaining its full Catholicity, while independent of papal control, had no leader to advance their cause. The Puritans were noisy and insistent. Doubtless they quarrelled among themselves, but they united in hating equally the Romanist and the Anglican. As for the great mass of the laity, they were bewildered by the rapid but contradictory changes of the last thirty years. In Henry's time they had seen the Pope's authority rejected, the monasteries destroyed, but the denial of transubstantiation punished by death. Under Edward they had been bidden to accept the doctrines of uncompromising Protestantism. When Mary reigned, once more they were called upon to deem the Pope the head of the English Church, while if they professed the doctrine strictly enjoined in Edward's days, the faggots and the firebrand awaited them. No wonder if they were hopelessly puzzled by the time when Elizabeth took her sister's place. They were not too sure what they believed; but they were quite certain that, until the queen had shown her hand, the wiser part was, in public at least, to express no religious beliefs at all.

Anarchy, dissension, and weakness were,

then, the perils menacing both State and Church at the commencement of this reign. But at last the nation had a ruler who was equal to the needs of her time. From the moral point of view, Elizabeth's is not an attractive character. She had little or no sincerely religious convictions. She was ludicrously vain, and the grossest flattery was acceptable to her. Her behaviour was only not questionable because, unfortunately, there could be no question about its scandalous character. In public matters she would use without hesitation any falsehood or intrigue which might help to gain her ends. Yet she was as sagacious and skilful a monarch as the world has ever known. She raised her country from its lowest shame to splendid triumphs. She overcame a host of difficulties, any one of which might easily have proved fatal. She extricated the Church from its troubles. And, by that undefinable personal magnetism which had been her father's before her, she kept in sympathetic touch with her people, she read instinctively their wishes, she stirred their enthusiasm. Bold when courage was needed, cautious when it behoved her to walk warily, she trod the dangerous path of her early reign

with scarcely one false step. To her other gifts she joined that which, perhaps more than the rest, is the mark of a really great ruler—she was a skilful judge of men.

Such was the instinct which led her to choose William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, as her confidential adviser when she came to the throne. His counsel proved of the greatest service in dealing with the difficulties of the ecclesiastical situation. What line of action she would take in regard to them was a matter of uncertainty with the general public. Contradictory reports were current as to her private views. Yet a repudiation of the papal claims must have seemed inevitable. For Elizabeth was the daughter of Anne Boleyn. According to the papal argument, Henry had never been lawfully divorced from Katharine, consequently Elizabeth was an illegitimate child, and as such a mere usurper of the crown. Thus her attitude towards Rome seemed predetermined. It was in the highest degree unlikely that any Pope, least of all such a Pope as Paul IV., who filled the see of Rome at this time, would declare Henry VIII. to have been right and Pope Clement VII. wrong.

Inevitable as a quarrel with Rome appeared, Elizabeth resolved that the blame for beginning it should not rest with her. As long as possible she would remain on friendly terms with the Pope and the Romanist bishops. Nor, if she could help it, would she begin her reign by alienating the extreme Reformers. Against both Pope and Puritan there would be struggles enough in the future. But her first business must be to strengthen her own position by allaying the fears of all parties, nervously expectant as they were of sudden change, and full of suspicion as to her designs. So the order went forth that there would be no alterations in religion until Parliament had been consulted; for the present the services used in Mary's time were to be retained, but liberty was given to recite the Creed and Lord's Prayer in English, and to use the English Litany. Thereby a slight concession was made at once to the Anglican party without seriously offending the Marian bishops. Their presence at the coronation was thus secured—when the Roman Mass, omitting only the elevation of the Host, was said. Soon the question of supremacy would arise, and that seemed a better ground upon which

to fight the Pope than details of ritual or doctrine.

And Paul IV. was not slow to act as the queen had anticipated. He sent her an insolently-worded letter, asserting that no English sovereign could reign without the consent of Rome, that Elizabeth was illegitimate, and that only a complete and immediate submission to the Papacy could prevail upon Rome to overlook the fact. Thus from his side, as the queen wished, had come the declaration of war. Once made, it was answered with decisive swiftness. Parliament met in January 1559, and on April 29 the "Royal Supremacy" Act had become law. Once more the papal claims were repudiated. Again the independence of the English sovereign was asserted. Yet Elizabeth deliberately refused, as savouring of profanity, the title of "supreme head" of the Church which Henry had adopted. In place of it, she styled herself "supreme governor," explaining that this involved no claim to authority other than that "which was of ancient time due to the imperial crown of the realm—that is, under God to have sovereignty and rule over all manner of persons." Thus defined, and cleared

from the misunderstanding which Henry's title of "supreme head" might cause, the royal supremacy was objectionable only to those who upheld the rival supremacy of the Pope. But to the Papacy, as has been explained, the bishops were firmly attached. Having been Mary's loyal servants, they could not countenance views the holding of which she and they had regarded as the most heinous of crimes. Vainly they opposed the Supremacy Bill in Parliament. When it had become law, and they were required, in common with all clergy and magistrates, to take an oath declaring their acceptance of it, thirteen at once refused, and were deprived of their sees. As they were declared Romanists, no other course was possible. But the treatment they received offers a pleasant contrast to the persecuting spirit of Mary's reign. So far from being put to death, their imprisonment was of a nominal kind, save when Romanist plots or their own conduct made a more rigorous confinement necessary. It is to be noticed that the number of clergy who refused the oath was small. Except for the Marian bishops, the papal supremacy was overthrown without any real opposition.

Other important consequences followed from this Act and others passed at the period. The visitatorial and judicial powers which Henry VIII. had claimed as the head of the Church, were now reasserted as the Crown's prerogative, but their exercise was to be vested in a body of commissioners. Thus originated the Court of High Commission, destined to become so prominent in the reign of Charles I. The wretched financial state of the country was made an excuse for appropriating some of the Church revenues. Many of Henry VIII.'s statutes, repealed under Mary, were brought into force again. Most important of all, authority was given for the use of a revised English Prayer-book.

In the first months of her reign Elizabeth, guided by Cecil, had recognised the necessity and the importance of this step. With the repudiation of the Pope would disappear once more the Roman service-books. Clearly the English Church must have a Prayer-book of its own. Two had been issued in Edward's days—the first, of a conservative character, in 1549, the second, embodying more Protestant views, in 1552. Could either be brought into use again without change? This did not

appear possible. Elizabeth herself, and the Anglican party with her, wished simply to bring back the book of 1549. But its reissue would have given bitter offence to the Puritans. And it was desirable to conciliate them, so far as it could be done without altering Church doctrine in essential points. Essential points, however, had been touched in the 1552 version. Its fresh adoption would have been as offensive to the Anglican party as that of the 1549 book to the Puritan. So Elizabeth decided wisely upon a compromise. A committee was formed to prepare a new Prayer-book, which, based mainly upon that of 1552, would return in some respects to the character of its predecessor. Thus it might be expected to gain acceptance with both sides.

To take the lead in this work Cecil summoned to London Matthew Parker. Born at Norwich in 1504, he had been chaplain to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, and Dean of Lincoln in the reign of Edward. Then, deprived of his office under Mary, he had not fled abroad, but had passed those troubled years in quiet and studious retirement. A man whose brilliant gifts were not greater than his modesty, he had no desire for preferment. Very

reluctantly did he obey the royal summons. But Elizabeth, relying both on her own knowledge and Cecil's judgment, was sure that in Matthew Parker she had the right man for the difficult task of restoring order to the Church, and of securing its position midway between Romanism and Puritanism. So, under Parker's presidency, the work of revising the Prayer-book was begun. In 1559 the new book was published, and ordered by Parliament to be put into use on June 24.

The changes which it made in the 1552 version were few, but highly important. For a detailed list of them the reader may be referred again to "The Story of the Prayer-book," a companion volume to that in his hands. One alteration, however, may be instanced as typical of the rest, and as illustrating the spirit of compromise guiding the revisers. The words of administration in Holy Communion provided by the 1549 Prayer-book had been: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Similarly in the administering of the chalice the first part only of the formula as we now know it was employed. But this language

was distasteful to the Protestant Reformers compiling the second Prayer-book—that of 1552. The words seemed to them to imply the doctrine of the Real Presence, which, indeed, was the case. Therefore they struck them out, replacing them by sentences intended to show that there was no Real Presence, and that the service was but a memorial rite: "Take and eat this *in remembrance* that Christ died for thee, and feed upon Him *in thy heart by faith* with thanksgiving." "Drink this *in remembrance* that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful." Accordingly, when Parker and his committee, in the course of the revision, came to the words of administration, they found these very different forms in the two earlier Prayer-books. Which should they adopt? That of 1549 would offend the Puritans, while it satisfied the Anglicans; that of 1552 might please the Puritans, but, standing alone, it would seem to the Anglicans quite inadequate. Yet they wished to find some means of conciliating both parties, and of persuading them to live harmoniously together within the fold of the English Church. In this dilemma Parker and his associates hit upon the ingenious idea

of combining the sentences, by linking the formula of 1552 to that of 1549. So the words of administration prescribed in the Elizabethan Prayer-book of 1559 consisted of the two older forms joined together, and these are the words still used by the English Church to-day.

As a skilful compromise, the new Prayer-Book met with the reception which was to be expected. For people were enthusiastic about it, but all felt themselves able to use it. It satisfied, on the whole, the middle party. The Puritans grumbled at it as "papistical," but they accepted it in the hope of bringing about another revision at no distant time. The Roman Catholics deemed it "Protestant," yet —and this is a noteworthy fact—for the next eleven years they continued to attend the services of the English Church. Elizabeth and Cecil were entitled to congratulate themselves upon the success of their policy. Within less than a year they had freed the English Church and State from the papal claims, established the royal supremacy, provided an English Prayer-book which all, save the Marian bishops and their few followers, were content to use, and avoided any open breach with the

Puritans. One more achievement, and that not the least, should be added. They had discovered Matthew Parker. His handling of the Prayer-book revision confirmed their belief in his fitness for judicious leadership. On December 17, 1559, he was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury.

Very urgent at this time was the need of strengthening the Church's ministry. Almost the whole episcopate had to be re-manned. Eleven new bishops were consecrated within three months of Parker's accession to the primacy. Some of the number—such as Grindal, Bishop of London, Cox, Bishop of Ely, and Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury—had fled the country in Mary's reign, and their views were strongly tinged with continental Protestantism. At first sight their preferment, considering the opinions they held, may seem rather strange. But Elizabeth, cordially as she hated Puritanism, was wise enough to know that to bestow office on an opposer is often the surest way of modifying his opposition. Certainly this proved true in the case of the bishops. Jewel, for instance, had been a Puritan of a strongly Calvinistic type. Yet in 1562 he published his famous "Apology," a masterly work defend-

ing the true Catholicity of the English Church against the claims of Rome, and insisting upon its lineal descent from the Church of primitive times. Every trace of his Puritanism had disappeared.

A less subtle reason for making bishops with Puritan leanings was that others could not be found. At least those chosen were men of some learning, and the number of learned clergy at the moment was small—as indeed was the supply of clergy of any type. Parker's inquiries, of the year 1561, showed that in the diocese of Norwich alone more than 400 parishes were without incumbents, while, two years later, of 118 clergy in the archdeaconry of Middlesex, three only could be found who had a knowledge of Latin and Greek. No wonder that Cecil, accompanying the queen on a royal progress, had occasion to remark, "Here be many slender ministers, and much nakedness of religion." Such was the state of things which Parker did his best to amend. He held very large ordinations. He provided lay readers to assist the clergy. He compiled a second book of homilies in order that the most "slender ministers" might be enabled to preach. To save them from going astray in doctrinal matters, did they

venture on sermons of their own, he took the lead in revising Cranmer's Forty-two Articles of Religion. Reduced to thirty-eight, they were issued in 1563; in 1571 they reappeared as thirty-nine, in the form they bear to-day.

While homilies and articles might aid the "slender ministers" of Cecil's description, the "nakedness of religion" was less easily to be remedied. The monastic churches had been destroyed in the reign of Henry, the parish churches mutilated past repair in Edward's days. But the "nakedness" now so evident was not that of fabric alone. Disappointed of gaining their ends by constitutional means, the Puritan clergy were taking matters into their own hands, and stripping bare Church building and Church service alike of whatever was alien from their views. "Some"—to quote Cecil again—"say the service in a surplice, others without a surplice. Some receive the Communion kneeling, others standing, others sitting." Whatever ceremonies prescribed by the Prayer-book displeased them were either performed with intentional slovenliness or omitted altogether. And, despite homilies, articles, and injunctions, doctrines quite irreconcilable

with the Church's position were preached from Church pulpits.

In fact, the time had come when the Church must enter the second phase of its struggle for existence. From early days that existence had been menaced by the Papacy, which had striven at various times, and with varying degrees of failure, to make England no more than a province of Rome. Now that danger was past. Romanist intrigues and conspiracies there would be still. But Rome's last chance of real success had been lost through the policy of Mary. By the Supremacy Act of Elizabeth's first year the independence of the English Church from the Papacy had been established for good. Freed from this danger, the English Church, with scarcely a pause, had to face another. The difference between Anglican and Puritan doctrine was not one of degree but of kind. In other words, if Puritanism prevailed, the Church, as a Church, would cease to exist. The theology of the Puritans was mainly that of John Calvin. One might believe his teaching about "predestination" or one might believe the Church's teaching about baptismal regeneration. But one could not believe both. Again, every branch of the Catholic Church

holds (to quote our own Prayer-book) "that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." But the Puritans from the first disliked Episcopal government, and soon persuaded themselves that the whole order of the Episcopate should be abolished. Compared with their disbelief in the Ministry and Sacraments of the Church, the other points to which they took exception —the use of any ceremonies, the wearing of any distinctive dress by the clergy—may seem trifling. Yet through these they struck at great principles behind them. Either the English Church was a branch of the Church Catholic, inheriting its traditions and usages, or it was not. And it was upon this crucial question that Anglican and Puritan found themselves in disagreement. It is only by remembering this difference of principle in the background that we can understand why men should fight so fiercely over the wearing of a surplice or a college cap.

Therefore the contest with Puritanism was bound to come. It is the pride of the English Church to be the most comprehensive religious body in the world. Within its ranks there is room for men of very different

shades of opinion. But not even the most comprehensive of religious bodies can hope to retain the allegiance of those who deny the very fundamentals of its existence. Moreover, the idea of a comprehensive Church had no attractions for the Puritans. They did not wish the system of the Church to be made more elastic, but to put quite a different system in its place. They did not ask for toleration within the Church; their firm resolve was to transform the whole Church until it had been brought into exact accordance with their own views.

Again, the Roman aggression had come from without. So also, to a large degree, had the earlier forms of ultra-Protestantism. But the fact which gave the Puritan movement its chief danger was that it came from within. In other words, men who disbelieved in the Church entered its ministry with a view to carrying out their purposes more effectually. Matthew Parker and his successors had a task much more difficult than that of defending the Church against external attack. They had to deal with men who were clergy of the English Church, although they repudiated its historic form of government and denied its most essential beliefs.

CHAPTER VII

ANGLICAN *versus* PURITAN

ENOUGH has been said to show that Parker's task in dealing with the Puritans was certain to be one of great difficulty. A staunch Churchman, he was yet far from a bigot. He recognised that there might be a considerable diversity of use among the clergy without imperilling any necessary principle. His aim was merely to see that things were done decently and in order; he wished to allow the Puritans as wide a latitude as was consistent with any real adherence to the doctrine and government of the Church. Some of the Puritans were willing to meet him half-way. Whatever their private convictions, they were ready, for the sake of quietness, to conform with the Church's regulations in their public ministry. A more numerous party, however, would make no such conces-

sion. They were determined to take their own line, hoping, by their policy of opposition, ultimately to force their views upon the Church.

Nor was this attitude the Archbishop's only trouble. His perplexing task was made much harder by the capriciousness of the queen. Elizabeth had no liking for Puritanism. If her religious opinions were lax, she held very strong views on obedience to authority. When the Puritans took liberties with the Prayer-book, she rated Parker as if he were responsible for their misbehaviour. She admonished him for permitting the vagaries of "persons abounding more in their own sense than wisdom," through whom had come into the Church "an open and manifest disorder and offence." He was sharply bidden to end these practices. Accordingly, he drew up Articles for the purpose. Then he asked for the royal authority to make them effective. But this, to his dismay, the queen refused to give. For one thing, she was greatly influenced by her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, whose religion, such as it was, inclined to the Puritan side. For another, Elizabeth had wit enough to see that any attempt to enforce

order would bring noisy protests from the Puritans. She preferred that Parker, rather than herself, should be their target. So, while she upbraided Parker in private correspondence for his slowness in taking action, she would give him no public assistance. "If," wrote the Archbishop, sadly contemplating his Articles, "the queen's majesty will not authorise them, the most part be likely to lie in the dust for execution."

Thus disappointed, he resolved to act upon his own initiative as Archbishop. In 1566 he published a lengthy set of "Advertisements," giving directions to the clergy about such matters as the reverent administration of the sacraments, the use of the cap and surplice, and the conduct of services. In each case the requirements made were of a moderate character, representing the minimum of needful conformity. Moderate as they were, they gave great offence to the Puritans. About 100 of the London clergy who had set the "Advertisements" at defiance were summoned before Parker at Lambeth, and thirty-seven of them, persisting in their refusal to make the "declaration of conformity" were deprived of their cures. This step caused a

violent outbreak on the part of those who shared their views. Scurrilous tracts were scattered broadcast. Disorder in the churches increased. Divine service was interrupted by brawlers. Some of the deprived clergy began to conduct Puritan services in their own houses.

Moreover, the strength of Puritanism was not limited to its adherents among the clergy. It spread in the universities, especially at Cambridge, where it was championed by Thomas Cartwright, a writer of much ability. It was backed by Leicester and other powerful friends at court. It had its party in Parliament. It commanded a large following in Convocation itself. And within three years of the "Advertisements" public affairs took a turn which gave Puritanism a stronger hold upon the masses. For from 1569 began a fresh series of attempts to do by force that which, as it was now clear, could never be done by other means—namely, to bring England under the power of the Papacy. Pope Paul IV. had been met with the Royal Supremacy Act. Next, Pius IV. had endeavoured to gain the queen's favour by diplomacy. He had failed, and, chagrined by the failure, his

successor at Rome, Pius V., reverted to the older method. On the Continent Romanism had regained much of its position within the last few years. The new Pope determined to place England under papal control once more. Encouraged by him, armed risings took place in the northern counties. Large numbers of the rebels were put to death. In 1570 Pius excommunicated Elizabeth, commanded her subjects to renounce their allegiance to her, and encouraged plots for her assassination.

Hitherto the Romanists had lived quietly enough in England since the queen's accession. Some of them had contrived to arrange for the saying of Mass, the greater part had been content to attend the services of the English Church. Now they were placed in a position of extreme difficulty. If they disobeyed the Pope's Bull of Excommunication, they became heretics; if they obeyed it, they were traitors. Roman emissaries and spies flocked into England. Roman forms of worship were practised—and thus, we may note, the definite act of schism, the setting up of altar against altar, came from the Pope's side, and was not done by Henry VIII., Edward VI.,

or Elizabeth. The air was full of Romanist conspiracies. If Elizabeth could be killed, Mary, Queen of Scots would succeed to the crown, and she was certain to restore the old religion. In this condition of things, it is not surprising if some innocent Romanists were suspected of traitorous leanings, or if the treatment of those whose plots were detected was hideously severe. But to call them "martyrs," as the Roman Church did subsequently, is to misuse the term. They suffered, not for their religious, but their political opinions. They were persecuted and put to death, not because they were the friends of Roman doctrine, but because they were the foes of the English Crown. From 1569 until the defeat of the Armada in 1588, the nation was menaced continually by the dangers of internal rebellion and external attack, conducted with the object of restoring the Papacy.

It is easy to see how such a state of affairs was favourable to Puritanism. That the Puritans tampered with the Prayer-book or refused to wear surplices seemed a small thing; that they detested the Pope seemed a very great thing indeed. In the hour of common danger, men urged, disputes about doctrine

should be forgotten. Whatever the religious defects of Puritanism, let it be welcomed as a defence against Romanism. Such arguments found much support in Parliament. They were not without their influence upon Cecil —now Lord Burghley; but they failed to deceive Elizabeth. She faced the future with intrepid courage. She believed—and her faith was gloriously justified—that England could hold its own in battle with any foreign power. She was sure, looking beyond the immediate future, that the overthrow of the Church, which the triumph of Puritanism must involve, would not be for the welfare of the nation. When, therefore, the Puritans, exulting in their growing popularity, began still further to defy the Church's laws, the queen herself took action, insisting that all who held office in the Church must accept the Prayer-book, the Articles, and the Royal Supremacy.

In May 1575 Matthew Parker died. It would be difficult to exaggerate the debt owed by the English Church to this wise, broad-minded, and courageous man. More than any other he had marked out for it the middle path between the errors of Rome on one side and of Puritanism on the other. By tempera-

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ment a student and a recluse, he had been unwilling to accept the burden of office ; but, once accepted, he performed its duties with a splendid zeal. Romanists might dislike him, Puritans vilify him, the queen treat him with bewildering fickleness, yet he went on his difficult way unmoved. Many names of Archbishops of Canterbury are much more familiar to the average English churchman than that of Matthew Parker, to whom, nevertheless, not least the fact is due that there exists to-day an English Church.

His successor, Edmund Grindal, was a man of a different type. He has been mentioned in the last chapter as one of the bishops with Puritan leanings, strengthened by his sojourn at Strasburg in Mary's reign. Why was he chosen for the primacy ? Possibly the queen thought that his new position would modify his views ; more probably, she allowed her judgment to be overruled by her wish to please Leicester. In any case, the appointment did not prove a success. Soon the Archbishop and the queen were in conflict. The Puritan clergy and people had devised a form of religious meeting which they called "prophesying." It may be described roughly as a

prayer-meeting at which any of those present were allowed to speak, under the guidance, as they believed, of the Holy Spirit. Their idea was to imitate the methods of the early Church at Corinth, as described by St. Paul; but the queen and Parker also considered these meetings dangerous. Not spiritual themes, they feared, but the iniquity of the surplice and the popery of the Prayer-book were the customary topics of the "prophesyings." But the new archbishop decided to authorise the holding of such meetings. Elizabeth peremptorily forbade them. Grindal rebuked the queen for her interference. "Things of this nature," he said, with more truth than discretion, "are to be decided in the Church and not in the palace." That was a courageous assertion of his rights, in striking contrast to the servile flattery usually bestowed upon Elizabeth. But it did not tend to pacify her. She wrote to the bishops forbidding all public religious gatherings except for the services of the Church, and she suspended Grindal from office. He seems to have been partially reinstated later, but he was already an old man, and in 1583 he died.

After her experience with Grindal, the

queen was not likely to choose another archbishop of such views. Indeed a strong man, capable of enforcing order without fear, was urgently required by the state of ecclesiastical affairs. Such a man she found in John Whitgift, who had been previously Bishop of Worcester. Already he had proved himself a staunch Churchman. Now he addressed himself to his wider task with courage and firmness. The situation was highly critical. More plainly than in Parker's days, the question at issue was not one merely of clerical attire or small points of ritual, but simply whether the English Church should be overthrown and a Presbyterian sect established in its place. Under Grindal's weak rule the Puritans had been able to go to much greater lengths than before. No longer on the defensive, they attacked openly the Church's system. Roman conspiracies, as we have seen, had made their cause popular with the masses. At Court and in Parliament they seemed likely to gain the mastery. Only the queen and the Archbishop stood between them and their triumph.

To understand the seriousness of the position, it will be well to notice the developments

which Puritanism had made. Its leaders, we must remember, were not members of an outside body but ordained ministers of the Church. Had they frankly separated from it, they might have pleaded the right to follow their own beliefs. But they were English clergy, bound by their ordination vows, and owing obedience to the rules and officers of the body whose service, by their own choice, they had entered. On the one hand they were clergy of the episcopally-governed Church of England; on the other, they defied the bishops, taught doctrines in flat contradiction of those which they had promised at their ordination to uphold, and worked with zeal for the destruction of the Church's organisation. As clergy, they had to administer the sacraments. They did so with intentional irreverence. They were ordered by lawful authority to use the Prayer-book. If, as a matter of conscience, they could not do so, their proper course, obviously, was to resign their positions in a ministry of which they could be no longer loyal members. What they did was either to neglect the Prayer-book entirely, or hastily to gabble through a psalm or lesson for the day, and then to edify their

flocks for an hour or two with extempore prayer and preaching. Nor did their innovations cease here. In 1580 two of their leaders, Cartwright and Travers, published a plan for introducing the Presbyterian form of government into the English Church. This plan was actually carried out in some parts of the country. In 1584 an attempt was made definitely to establish Presbyterianism by Parliamentary sanction.

In such circumstances Whitgift had to act swiftly and with firmness. Like Parker, he did not try to obtain exact uniformity, but—again following Parker's example—he did insist that every ordained member of the Church must publicly accept the Prayer-book, the Articles, and the Royal Supremacy. And to this policy, despite storms of abuse from the Puritans, despite remonstrances from Lord Burghley, despite the hostile attitude of Parliament, he adhered. His perseverance reaped its reward. When the defeat of the Armada in 1588 had freed the public mind from its dread of a Romanist conquest, Puritanism began to lose its popularity. Consciousness of this fact goaded its supporters to fury. They gave utterance to their feelings in a series of

scurrilous tracts, known, from the fictitious name of their perpetrators, as the "Martin Marprelate" libels. In them Whitgift is assailed as "the Canterbury Caiaphas," "a monstrous anti-Christ"; the bishops as "incarnate devils," "cozening knaves," "the enemies of God." The Prayer-book is described as "full of corruption," while Convocation appears as "a crew of monstrous and ungodly wretches," "an anti-Christian swinish rabble," "the Convocation House of devils, and of Beelzebub of Canterbury, the chief of devils." Such language defeated its own purpose. It did not commend the cause of Puritanism to the nation at large. On the Church's side, too, the pen was employed. But infinitely above the level of the Marprelate tracts and their direct replies was the splendid *Ecclesiastical Polity* of Richard Hooker, Master of the Temple—a searching examination of the Puritan arguments, which to this day is a classic of our Church's literature.

Realising the change in public opinion, Elizabeth took stronger steps for the suppression of Puritanism. In 1593 she procured the passing of an Act which made banishment the penalty for holding unauthorised religious

meetings or refusing to attend church. Such a course, harsh as it may seem, appeared necessary at the moment; it was at least a great improvement upon the expedient, tried for a year or two previously, of throwing nonconformists into prison, using torture to make them change their beliefs. Such barbarities were, of course, the device of the civil government; no responsibility for them can be attached to Whitgift. Under the new Act, many of the Puritans fell back for a time into the ranks of the Church, waiting until events should shape themselves more favourably to their plans; others emigrated, and settling chiefly in Holland, became the originators of many independent sects. Thus was peace restored to the Church, and for the remaining years of Elizabeth's reign the Archbishop could turn his attention to its internal affairs, strengthening its organisation, and improving the standard of its learning.

Elizabeth died in March 1603. In her long and eventful reign the true character of the English Church had been vindicated in two directions. At one extreme the papal claims had been rejected finally, at the other the Puritan attack had been warded off for

a time. Soon it would be renewed with greater ferocity. But, if the battle were not yet won, the battle-ground was defined. In all future conflict the Church would know what position it was bound to defend. Through all the changes of the past seventy years, its continuity had been preserved. Warham, Cranmer, Pole, Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift, widely as their views differed, had held precisely the same office in the same Church, each in turn was the due successor of Augustine. Made independent of Roman control, endowed with its own Prayer-book, purified from mediæval errors in its doctrine, the national Church of England was still a branch of the Church Catholic, neither a mere province of Rome, nor a fresh offshoot from the sectarian bodies of Germany and Switzerland.

Since our concern in these pages is with the story of the Reformation rather than the general history of England, we can afford to pass rapidly through the years of James I.'s reign. Their chief significance to the Church was that they witnessed the gathering of the storm which was to burst with such fury in the next reign. In them the tie between Church and Crown was made stronger than

ever it had been before. Henry VIII. dominated ecclesiastical affairs by a tyrannical use of his powers. Elizabeth had rendered it assistance when such help was invaluable. Yet, so far as Henry and Elizabeth had controlled the Church, they did so by force of their strong personalities, not by elaborate theories. Their absolutism was that of practice rather than of doctrine. With all their faults, they were in touch with the people; a fact which enabled them to get their own way without difficulty. This being the case, they did not trouble greatly concerning abstract theories of sovereignty. With James the case was very different. His was in no sense a strong personality. His was none of that magnetic sympathy which bound ruler and ruled together in Tudor days. On the other hand, he was a great theoriser. He aimed at a despotism based upon official prerogative rather than upon the human qualities of the despot. He convinced himself of "the divine right" of kings to be above all law, and he imbued his son most thoroughly with the same belief. Worst of all, he induced the Church, grateful for the assistance which Elizabeth had rendered it, to accept this view.

The inevitable consequence followed. Absolutism, in the eyes of the nation, stood for the Crown; the Crown stood for the Church. Let absolutism become intolerable to the people of England—as become intolerable it must—and its overthrow was certain. But, since absolutism, the Crown, and the Church had become indissolubly bound together in the public view, the fall of the first could not come about without the fall of the other two. If absolutism went, Crown and Church must go with it.

When James VI. of Scotland became James I. of England, both the Romanists and Puritans had hopes of gaining his support. The former remembered that he was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots; the latter, that he had received a Presbyterian education in Scotland, where the views of the extreme reforming party, owing to the advocacy of John Knox, had made great progress. Neither Romanists nor Puritans, however, found their expectations fulfilled. The new king showed a strong intellectual interest in religious questions. He was never happier than when taking part in doctrinal controversy. He had an enormous opinion of his own skill as a dis-

putant. He welcomed any occasion of exhibiting it in public. Yet of personal religion his share was not large. His convictions were never strong, and fluctuated uneasily between various beliefs. Perhaps in one point alone did he resemble the sovereign whose place he was called upon to fill. His love of flattery was equal to Elizabeth's. At a time in his reign when the primacy was vacant, and the eyes of the whole Church were turned to Lancelot Andrewes, scholar and saint, as the man worthy above all others to fill it, James passed over Andrewes and appointed one George Abbot—whose claim to the post consisted in the fact that he had extolled the king in print as "zealous as David, learned as Solomon, religious as Josiah," and so forth. If the reader cares to learn at greater length how fulsome a panegyric James could gravely accept, he has but to study the "dedication" still printed in our Bibles. Well did its author gauge the royal taste when he likened Elizabeth to a star, James to "the Sun in his strength," when he discovered "many singular and extraordinary graces" in his monarch, when he asserted that James's religious zeal had "so bound and firmly knit the hearts of

all Your Majesty's loyal and religious people unto You, that Your very name is precious among them ; their eye doth behold You with comfort, and they bless You in their hearts, as that sanctified Person, who, under God, is the immediate Author of their true happiness." This estimate, to say the least, is scarcely in accord with the facts of history.

Immediately after his accession James was presented with a petition, signed by some seven hundred ministers, asking for a redress of the Puritan grievances, which, whatever their weight, were set forth in temperate language. The king's answer was to summon a conference at Hampton Court in 1604 for the avowed purpose of hearing both sides, and with the other object of enabling him to show his skill as a religious disputant. Four divines represented the Puritans ; the Church's case was entrusted to Whitgift, eight bishops, and ten clergy. Owing to Whitgift's age, the actual leader of the Church party was Bancroft, Bishop of London. Among the features of the Prayer-book to which the Puritans took exception may be named the words "priest" and "absolution," the office of confirmation, the sign of the cross in baptism,

the use of the ring in marriage, and the wearing of the surplice. They demanded that the "test" for clergy should consist of subscription to the Articles and Royal Supremacy alone, and not—as Parker and Whitgift had insisted—to the Prayer-book also. At the same time they pressed for a number of alterations in church discipline, as that "men be not excommunicated for trifles and twelvepenny matters."

Impracticable as were many of their demands, having regard to the doctrine of the Church—which, rather than the externals symbolising it, was the real point of attack—yet the Puritan representatives had just reason to complain of the treatment they received. Bancroft lost his temper and interrupted them rudely. The king quickly gave up all pretence of impartiality, and indulged his royal humour at their expense. Once indeed he was seriously perturbed, when a Puritan speaker showed a preference for Presbyterian over Episcopal Church government. "If you aim at a Scotch presbytery," he broke out, "it agreeth as well with monarchy as God with the devil." As the result of the conference a few small alterations were made in the wording of the

Prayer-book, and one considerable addition was authorised. This was the second part of the Catechism, dealing with the Sacraments, the preparation of which was entrusted to Overall, Dean of St. Paul's. It is an invaluable exposition of Church doctrine, but its tone was hardly of a nature to satisfy the Puritans. But the Hampton Court conference had another indirect result of the greatest importance. Anglicans and Puritans alike agreed that a new translation of the Bible was to be desired. And this agreement paved the way for the preparation of the "Authorised Version," issued in 1611.[1]

Shortly after the conference Whitgift died, and Bancroft was chosen as his successor. At once he took steps to enforce conformity. As before, the clergy were required to declare their acceptance of Prayer-book, Articles, and Royal Supremacy. But now they were called upon further to assert that they made this declaration willingly and with full approval of its nature. Thereby some who, disliking at heart the Prayer-book, would have been willing to accept it for the sake of peace, found themselves unable to make the declaration, and were

[1] See "The Story of the Bible" in this series.

deprived of their benefices in consequence. Yet the number of such deprivations was small, and the need for strict discipline in the Church was urgent. Bancroft has been assailed as a ruthless persecutor. It must be remembered to whom his "tests" were applied. Conformity was exacted by him not from people in general, but from those who proposed to officiate as clergy of the English Church. There is a vast difference between penalising laymen for their religious opinions and insisting that none shall be ministers of a Church who are not in full accord with its doctrines. The former Bancroft did not attempt. For the second he strove with whole-hearted zeal. What the relaxation of such watchfulness would bring was shown plainly enough in the days of his successor.

That his policy should make him unpopular was only to be expected. Just as the Romanist conspiracies of 1570 had made England support Puritanism as a defence against "popery," so, in the reign of James, was the cause of Puritanism strengthened by the Romanist "Gunpowder Plot." The old dread of Rome revived. Parliament passed strong measures for dealing with the "recusants," as Romanists

in this country were styled. And, falling into the common error of supposing that to repel Puritanism is to support Rome, Parliament showed considerable hostility to Bancroft. For this the Archbishop was not to be blamed. Yet not all the dislike he gained was undeserved. That he should enforce discipline upon the Church was well enough. What was not well was that he did so as the king's official rather than as archbishop. More and more he identified himself with the theory of absolutism. More and more he figured in the public eye, not as a spiritual leader, but as the tool of the Crown. Despite Puritan influence, the majority of Englishmen felt it no grievance that the Archbishop should compel the clergy to use the Prayer-book. They cared a great deal, however, if the authority claimed for enforcing the Prayer-book were the alleged "divine rights of kings." In that case the nonconformist was fighting not merely for a narrow religious creed but for the liberty of England. If absolutism had become the principle of the Church, then the union of Church and Crown on the one side must be met by an alliance of Puritan and patriot on the other.

CHAPTER VIII

CHURCH AND CROWN

EACH year of the latter portion of his reign saw James become a better man and a worse ruler. His cheap flippancy, his weak grasp of religious truth, his tendency to value it only as an excuse for the pleasures of controversy, were replaced by a sincere and devout churchmanship. In theological argument, indeed, he found delight to the end. Yet if religion was as of old an alluring theme for discussion, it became also a deeply rooted principle of his life. At the close he spent all his days in prayer, received absolution, made his communion, and so died. Almost his last words were an assertion of his faithful attachment to the English Church. Its sincerity we cannot doubt. But as little can we doubt that James, acting with the best intentions, had wrought the Church

incalculable harm. As his churchmanship increased, so also did his belief in absolutism. Year by year his acts became more arbitrary. Already the mutterings of the approaching storm could be heard, but the king was deaf to them. To the uneasy stirring of the people, to the frank remonstrances of Parliament, he paid no heed. And, as we have seen already, he identified the Church in the eyes of the nation with his own view of the royal power. No one who differed from it could hope for ecclesiastical preferment. To be an assiduous courtier, to use gross flattery, to extol the divine right of kings in public, was the way to gain a bishopric. Those who should have been the spiritual leaders of the Church became, for the most part, the fawning sycophants of the king. And the clergy, naturally enough, reflected the views of their bishops.

In the last chapter, as an example of James's willingness to reward flattery, we mentioned his choice of Abbot as Archbishop of Canterbury when Bancroft was dead and Bishop Andrewes was expected by all to succeed him. Andrewes, however, beloved and honoured by all, might not

prove a meek supporter of the royal claims. In his presence James had raised the question of his kingly right to exact taxation without the interference of Parliament. Neile, Bishop of Lincoln, hastily assented to this doctrine. The king turned to Andrewes. "I think," he said, "that your Majesty may safely take my brother Neile's money, for he offers it." The man capable of this answer would not be such an archbishop as James desired. Nor, indeed, as soon appeared, was Abbot; a gloomy Puritan, who suffered the discipline of the Church to be relaxed, and more than once disregarded the king's wishes. Each of these was a dire offence to James. Abbot fell into disgrace, and practically was suspended from his office. After his fall much ecclesiastical power fell into the hands of John Williams, who had been appointed Lord Keeper by the king, and contrived to hold at the same time a bishopric, a deanery, a cathedral stall, and a parish. He aimed also at becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. In the meantime, having acquired these offices for himself, he was not unwilling to recommend other men for preferment. At his suggestion William Laud, Dean of Gloucester,

was nominated to the bishopric of St. David's.

Charles I. succeeded his father in 1625. Much more than the Crown, unfortunately, was included in his inheritance. From his earliest days he had been taught to hold as unquestionably true the doctrine of absolutism. "The divine right of kings" to govern without reference to Parliament or people was not a theory which he devised for himself, but one instilled into him from his youth. Again, the atmosphere of his court was that which his father had introduced. He was surrounded by busy flatterers, who, for their own ends, encouraged his belief in his absolute powers. The affairs of his kingdom were largely in the hands of a few politicians. They were careful to preserve their influence. Of the real feelings of the nation they kept the king in ignorance. They trained him to depend on them alone for information. They led him to think of Parliament as a body of which the only useful function was to vote supplies for the royal purse. Such being the surroundings and influence amid which Charles was placed, it is not surprising if his rule was marred by unhappy mistakes. Much

more surprising is it that he proved to be little affected by flattery, and that, surrounded as he was by worldly sycophants, his personal character, though lamentably weak, remained so free from graver blemish.

From the beginning of the reign the controlling influence in the Church was that of Laud. Born in 1573, he entered St. John's College, Oxford, in 1589. Four years later he was elected to a Fellowship, and became President in 1611. In 1616 he was appointed Dean of Gloucester. Next he held, in rapid succession, three bishoprics — that of St. David's in 1621, of Bath and Wells in 1626, of London in 1628—and in 1633 was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. But he was the Church's recognised leader long before he succeeded to its principal office. No character has been more variously estimated by historians than his. He has been extolled as a saint, he has been execrated as a bigot. Probably we shall feel that the truth lies between the two extremes. We shall admire his courage, his uprightness, his piety. We shall honour the work he did, and the high conception of the Church which he kept before him. Not less shall we deplore the

methods by which the work was executed and the means employed to realise the conception. We shall recognise in William Laud one who tried to fight God's battle with worldly weapons, one who pursued very good aims by very bad ways. Yet if his unwisdom of means led to his immediate failure, the truth of his principles brought ultimate success. The direct result of his policy was to bring himself to the scaffold and his Church to seeming ruin. But in after years, when his mistakes of method were forgotten, the ideals for which he had fought survived. Through the work of Laud it was that the Church, rising from the dust when the fury of Puritanism was spent, found its character unchanged and its heritage undiminished.

Very early in his reign the contest between Charles and Parliament began. The differences between them were many. Charles determined to assert his doctrine of absolute rule. Parliament was firm in resisting it. Charles had married a Roman Catholic, and wished to show toleration to people of his wife's religion. Parliament was strongly Puritan in its theology, and petitioned for the

seeking out and punishment of all Romanists. And its hatred of Romanism extended to all, whether members of the English Church or not, who held "Arminian" views—views, that is, which differed from the gloomy theology of Calvin. The king denied, with justice, that Parliament had any competence to decide matters of religious faith. Parliament retorted, with no less truth, that the king's attempts to raise money on his own authority were unconstitutional. The king encouraged the clergy to support his views in the pulpit. Parliament punished those who did so. Thus, a Dr. Manwaring preached that the royal will in imposing loans and taxes, though without the consent of Parliament, "must be obeyed under a penalty of eternal damnation." Manwaring was sent to prison by Parliament for these statements. On his release the king rewarded him with a deanery and later with a bishopric. The Parliamentary attack upon the king was directed with equal fierceness against Laud, as a "papistical Arminian" and the instigator of the royal policy. So the strife went on, until Charles, despairing of bending Parliament to his wishes, determined to reign without it.

After the dissolution in 1629 it did not meet again until 1640.

Looking back over the centuries at the struggle, we can see that on each of the opposing sides was a measure of right. The theories of government received from his father explain but cannot justify Charles's defiance of law. His ideas of ruling as an absolute monarch were flatly opposed to the constitution of England. To oppose him on these points was the clear duty of patriots. On the other hand, Parliament aimed at a tyranny quite as complete in religious matters as Charles did in civil. If it was the champion of national liberty, it was the foe of religious freedom. It did not seek tolerance for Calvinism. What it sought was to imprison or banish every man and woman in the kingdom who would not accept the Calvinistic creed to the exclusion of all others. It is true that, both at this and later stages of the struggle, the Puritans claimed to be acting in the interests of religious as well as civil liberty. But "liberty," as they interpreted it in practice when they had gained the upper hand, meant liberty to put down everything of which they themselves did not approve.

When Laud, in 1628, became Bishop of London, the diocese placed under his care was the chief stronghold of Puritanism. Nevertheless he set himself, with sturdy resolution, to enforce such regulations concerning Church use and ceremonial as seemed essential in the interests of order. On his translation to Canterbury, five years later, he was able to carry on the same campaign over a larger field. The abuses to be remedied were great. So far as possible the Puritans were treating both buildings and service in a manner designed to express their contempt for the Prayer-book. In many parishes an endowment provided by them secured the presence of a "lecturer," who, with most of the congregation, would wait in the churchyard until the close of the afternoon service, and then would enter the building with his adherents and preach a Calvinistic sermon. Some of the Puritan clergy were accustomed to deliver, in the form of an extempore prayer before their sermon, what was in effect a political speech. The churches themselves, as Laud described them, were "suffered to lie in a base and slovenly fashion," unswept and uncared-for. Upon the altar, standing lengthwise in

the chancel, the congregation would place their hats. So Laud issued injunctions to amend such evils. Inevitably his action gave great offence to the Puritans. Particularly obnoxious to them was his command that the Holy Table in every church should stand altar-wise against the east wall, and that rails should be set up to fence it off from the body of the chancel.

Such points may seem small in themselves, yet they represented principles of great importance. Laud insisted upon them less for their own sake than as parts of a carefully-reasoned scheme. The parrot-cry of "papist," so continuously raised against him was a charge quite devoid of truth. Twice, it is said, the Pope, recognising his ability, tried to propitiate him by offering him the dignity of a cardinal, and twice Laud refused. At his trial he was able to cite the names of more than twenty converts whom he himself had reclaimed from Romanism. It was just because he wished to diminish the number of secessions to Rome that he was anxious to provide a reverent service and ceremonial in his own Church. Otherwise those who were shocked by Puritan irreverence were driven to secede. It was a

dislike of sectarian intolerance and a longing for fitting ritual that was gaining the Pope fresh converts. "The Pope," said Laud, "never had such an harvest in England since the Reformation as he hath now upon the sects and divisions that are amongst us." Moreover, while ceremonies might be of small importance in themselves, the service of the Prayer-book, performed with becoming dignity, would remind the people of England that theirs was a true branch of the Catholic Church. This fact had been set forth with masterly skill in the writings of Andrewes. Laud, Andrewes' close friend, hoped to impress it upon the minds of every class by the object-lesson of their public worship. To quote his own words: "It is true the inward service of the heart is the great service of God, and no service is acceptable without it; but the external worship of God in the sanctuary is the great witness to the world that our hearts stand right in that service to God. These thoughts are they and no other which have made me labour as I have done for decency and an orderly settlement of the external worship of God in the Church. Scarce anything hath hurt religion more in these

broken times than an opinion in too many men, that because Rome had thrust some unnecessary and many superstitious ceremonies upon the Church, therefore the Reformation must have none at all."

Such was the principle guiding Laud in his work. Few, however, of his contemporaries were clear-sighted enough to discern its worth. Such support as he received was given to him rather as a champion of the Crown than as the man who was battling, almost single-handed, to maintain the historic character of the Church and to make its services proclaim that character. Rancorous abuse was heaped upon him by the Puritans. All the changes which Laud enforced were denounced as but so many steps towards Rome. In vain might he explain the meaning of each piece of symbolism, or set forth the real nature of Churchmanship. The Puritans were in no mood for calm discussion. They would have no remnants of the past, they would be satisfied with nothing but the creed of Calvin and the overthrow of Episcopacy. Not alone by his directions concerning Church services did the archbishop exasperate them. In another way also he ran counter to their prejudices,

and with far less reason. From early times Sunday, except during the hours of worship, had been devoted to bodily recreation—the only form of recreation, indeed, possible for those who could not read or write. No change in this respect had been introduced by the Continental reformers; but the English Puritans regarded all Sunday recreation as sinful. To combat this view James had issued a "Book of Sports," naming certain forms of amusement—such as archery, dancing, bowls, and leaping—as suitable for Sunday afternoons. Now Laud saw fit to re-issue this work, to append a letter expressing the king's wish that its directions should be followed, and ordering the clergy to read this letter to their people in church. Whatever the abstract merits of the question, Laud's unwisdom in taking this step at the moment he did is sufficiently obvious. If for a few years there had been no dancing on the village green of a Sunday afternoon, the cause of the English Church would scarcely have suffered much loss. On the other hand, the command that the letter should be read in church, and the subsequent deprivation of some clergy who disobeyed the command, gave the enemies

of the Church a handle which they were not slow to use.

Again, while Laud's other regulations were mostly wise and necessary, the methods he employed to secure obedience to them were as needless as they were unwise. In his personal behaviour he was overbearing and hasty. However illogically, men's estimate of any set of views will always be influenced by the demeanour of the person who holds them. Laud's ecclesiastical beliefs were practically identical with those which had been held, and fearlessly preached, by Lancelot Andrewes. Yet Andrewes made as few enemies as Laud made friends; and the explanation lies in the fact that Andrewes was genial and sympathetic, Laud impatient and hard. Again, we may believe that Laud would have accomplished his ends far more easily had he taken a higher view of his own office. But he did not strive to persuade his clergy as their father in God; he was content to coerce them as a representative of the Crown. Thereby he did not merely lessen his own influence, but he led the nation generally to think of the bishops as mere Crown officials. That conception acquired a firm hold upon the

minds of Englishmen; perhaps even now it is not quite extinct. Laud held, rightly enough, that the doctrine and ritual of the English Church should conform, as far as possible, with primitive usage; but somehow he failed to recognise how wide was the discrepancy between his own method of applying his jurisdiction and that which was customary in the days of the early Church. Once more, king and archbishop alike incurred much hatred by their employment of the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission. The origin of the last-named has been explained in Chapter IV. The Star Chamber dated from earlier times; now it was, in effect, a criminal court without a jury, where the king's influence was predominant. When, owing to the state of public opinion, the ordinary tribunals of the land would have acquitted, Charles was able to count upon the condemnation of his opponents in one or the other of these courts. Those guilty of ecclesiastical offences were brought before the High Commission; those libelling the king or refusing to pay their share of the forced loans he levied, were dealt with by the Star Chamber. The sentences imposed by the

latter were, according to modern ideas, revoltingly barbarous; but they were no more than the customary penalties of the age. This fact is often forgotten when reviewing such sentences. Not any special severity of the courts, but their unconstitutional nature was the real cause of the strong feeling aroused against them. Laud's personal connection with them was small, yet it was sufficient to identify him in the public eye with their actions and to increase his unpopularity.

For eleven years, as we have seen, Charles did not summon Parliament. "Remember," he had said early in his reign, "that Parliaments are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting and dissolution. Therefore, as I find the fruits of them to be good or evil, they are to continue or not to be." Since the fruits of the first three Parliaments were decidedly evil, from the king's point of view, he decided to exercise at once that absolute rule which he claimed. None the less, having regard to his own interests, this policy was short-sighted and disastrous. Hostile Parliament would have been had it met in 1630, but it was far more hostile by reason of the delay when at last it was called

together in 1640. And, however fierce its opposition, at least it would have enabled Charles to realise the state of public feeling. As things were, he spent these eleven years in a fool's paradise. Neither he nor his Council were in touch with the people. They believed what they wanted to believe. They convinced themselves that the unsettlement of the whole nation was in reality but the clamour of a few turbulent spirits. So in their ignorance the king and his ministers went on their way, refusing any concession, determined to convert the doctrine of absolute monarchy into a fact. On the other side was the strange alliance of patriotism with Puritanism; of those who cherished civil liberty with those who strove for religious tyranny, of those who loved their country with those who hated their country's Church. Year by year these feelings deepened in intensity, and the alliance gained in strength. No newspapers existed in those days to afford such feelings an outlet. To print even a flysheet seemed a risky step when the Star Chamber was at work. Parliament was the only means by which public opinion could make itself heard, and Parliament was not

permitted to meet. Each year the pressure of steam in the boiler was increasing, and Charles was holding down the safety-valve. In due course followed the explosion.

In 1633 the king and the archbishop had visited Scotland, in which country Puritanism was strongly established. Pained by the fact, they resolved to force upon the Scottish people the religious system which they were striving to uphold in England. As a first step they ordered the preparation of a Prayer-book, which Laud himself revised. Its introduction led to a riot in Edinburgh. In 1638 a Puritan organisation drew up a "Solemn League and Covenant," binding its members to work for "the extirpation of prelacy." Attempts to propitiate the malcontents broke down. The Scottish people were infuriated by the command to use the Prayer-book; they hated it for its English origin even more than for the doctrines set forth in it. In the vain hope of securing peace the king allowed a "General Assembly" of the Church to be held in Glasgow. The Assembly promptly abolished Episcopacy and Prayer-book alike. This was a plain declaration of war against the king, but war is an expensive business,

and Charles soon came to the end of his resources. Much against his will, therefore, he consented to summon Parliament. By appealing to its patriotism, by dwelling upon the danger of a Scottish invasion, he hoped to obtain from the Commons the supplies of money necessary for a campaign. Such hopes showed again how little he understood the actual feelings of his subjects. When Parliament met in April, 1640, it refused flatly even to discuss the granting of supplies until its ecclesiastical grievances had been redressed. Among them were specified setting the Holy Table "altar-wise," allowing "images" and crosses to be retained in churches, depriving "godly ministers" for their refusal to countenance the "Book of Sports"—in fact, the whole of the policy, both good and bad, for which Laud had been responsible. To undo his work the Commons demanded the appointment of a "Committee on Religion," composed entirely of Puritans. To this the king would not consent. Until he did so Parliament would not provide him with money. The position was clearly hopeless, and Charles dissolved Parliament less than a month after its meeting.

With the dissolution of Parliament, Convocation, which is the Parliament of the Church, automatically ceases to exist. But on this occasion Laud continued its proceedings under the name of a synod. His reasons for this exceptional step were two. In the first place, he hoped that the clergy would give the king that financial aid which the Commons had refused. This they did with alacrity. In the second place, as there had been no Parliament for the last eleven years, neither had there been any Convocation. Consequently the steps taken by Laud to enforce Church discipline had only his own authority. It might exculpate him from the charge of having acted illegally in the past, and it would strengthen his future action to have the formal approval of the synod for his rules. This also he obtained without difficulty. But in an unfortunate moment the synod drew up a form of oath to be taken by the clergy. Its intention was harmless enough. It aimed at insuring that those who held office in the Church were loyal to its traditional form of government and would not try to replace it by some form of Presbyterianism, or enter into allegiance with Rome. "I swear"—so ran a portion of the

form of oath prescribed—"that I approve the doctrine and discipline, or government, established in the Church of England as containing all things necessary to salvation; and that I will not endeavour, by myself or any other, directly or indirectly, to bring in any Popish doctrine contrary to that which is so established; nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, etc., as it stands now established." Under pressure of time, or through carelessness, the "etc." written in the draft—used to save the writer the trouble of naming chancellors, commissaries and other officials—was allowed to stand in the printed form. In a few days' time—and nothing could show more plainly the state of public feeling—the whole country was ablaze with anger and suspicion over this unlucky slip of the pen. "The government of this Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, etc."—into what sort of obedience was this papistical Laud inveigling the clergy? What did "etc." stand for? Doubtless the Pope, or his legate, or an English cardinal! Everywhere ministers refused to take the oath. A furious crowd broke into the High Com-

mission Court, with cries of "No bishops! No High Commission!" Lambeth Palace was attacked by a mob. The signs of the times were clear enough, and all but the king and his ministers could read them.

With the money granted by the clergy Charles renewed his Scottish campaign. He mismanaged it hopelessly at every step. England frankly rejoiced at the defeat of an English army for the sake of the humiliation it brought the king. More and more insistent became the demand that he should summon Parliament again. He was driven to yield. It met at Westminster on November 3, 1640. From that day the reign of Charles I. was virtually at an end.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIUMPH OF PURITANISM

Thus the English Church entered upon those twenty years which were to prove the darkest chapter of its history. As we study them, however, we must avoid the common error of supposing that the Church itself had lost the love of the great mass of Englishmen. It was not monarchy as an institution, but Charles' misuse of monarchical powers, which had filled the nation with rage. It was not Laud the spiritual head of the Church, but Laud the champion of absolutism, not the man who prized a reverent ceremonial, but the man who upheld the "divine right" of the king to defy the constitution, that seemed a menace to the public safety. The Archbishop, in the public view, had been merged in the Crown official. The religious changes he desired had been enforced by the authority of the

king. And with Laud's policy the Church as a whole had been identified. Sunday after Sunday the doctrine of the king's absolute prerogative was upheld in the pulpit. Convocation had nullified the action of Parliament, by providing Charles with the money which Parliament refused. Men whom Parliament had imprisoned and fined were given bishoprics by the king. Those who asserted rights which, in the view of Parliament, were essential to the liberty of the subject, had been ruthlessly punished by the Star Chamber, in which the Archbishop claimed a place on the bench. And the lamentable errors of method which Laud had committed, with the attachment of the Church to absolutist principles, were exaggerated a hundredfold by ignorance, by excitement, and by spiteful malice. The Church's enemies found no difficulty in confusing the popular mind as to the real issue. If absolutism was to be overthrown, Laud's method of ecclesiastical government must go too, since it was part and parcel of absolutism. To discriminate between Laud and Strafford—the king's other principal adviser—was impossible. They had stood for the same cause; they must fall

together. If Laud must be removed, should his fellow-bishops (and, presumably, fellow-conspirators) be suffered to remain in office? In fact, was not the total abolition of the episcopacy, and the substitution for it of some other form of religious government to be desired?

Such was the line of argument employed by the Puritans in order to gain their ends. It satisfied their own supporters, it appealed to the destructive instincts of the mob—always powerful in periods of revolution—and it prevailed for a time with a large number of Englishmen in general. Soon, however, the section of the nation which had been led astray came to realise the deception. In reality it was not episcopacy which had been at fault, but only a particular mode of episcopal administration. It was not the Church which had been their enemy, but a political system with which the Church, mistakenly enough, had allowed itself to be identified. The whips of Laud proved less intolerable than the scorpions of Puritan bigotry. The "religious liberty" so freely extolled in Cromwell's speeches was singularly hard to find in his practice. So the hearts of men,

never really alienated from the old Church, turned to it again with a deeper affection, and, with a vast sigh of relief, Puritanism was exchanged for the Church once more.

Even at the beginning of the "Long Parliament" in 1640, not a few of its members were alive to the difference between political reform and ecclesiastical destruction. They felt that Parliament had received a "mandate," in the modern phrase, to abolish absolutism, but none at all to abolish the Church. Whatever their religious views, the members were practically unanimous in thinking that the methods of arbitrary government employed by Charles must be made impossible. Not merely the Puritans, but men who a few years later were fighting in the Royalist ranks, voted for such measures as the impeachment of Strafford and Laud—since the latter no less than the former was considered a pillar of absolutism, and absurd stories of his "popish" plots were widely believed—the veto of the king's right to dissolve Parliament at his pleasure, and the closing of the Star Chamber and High Commission Courts. The poor of Lambeth, indeed, showed themselves better judges than Parliament of the Archbishop's

character. "I was accused by the House of Commons," he wrote in his diary under the date December 18, "for high treason, without any particular charge laid against me; which, they said, should be prepared in convenient time. . . . As I went to my barge, hundreds of my poor neighbours stood there, and prayed for my safety and return to my house. For which I bless God and them." Yet many of those who voted for the Archbishop's arrest did so in all honesty as patriots, not as Puritan bigots. The House of Commons was united in taking this, as well as the less questionable steps enumerated above, because each of them seemed essential, if the king's preposterous methods of rule were to be brought to an end.

But when the attack was transferred from the leading Churchman to the Church, when not merely the political acts of certain bishops but episcopacy itself were assailed, there was unanimity no longer. Petitions against any change in the form of Church government flowed in from various parts of the country. Within Parliament itself three parties at least were to be found. The first was composed of men who disliked Puritanism as much as

absolutism. They thought that episcopacy should be mended rather than ended. They were hostile to Laud's methods, about which they believed many unfounded stories, but they could not discern in the errors of one man sufficient reason for upsetting the whole organisation of the Church. The second party was composed of Puritans with Presbyterian views. Their wish was that the historic government of the Church should give way to a form in which boards of "elders" replaced the bishops. Thirdly, there were the Independent Puritans, including the Baptists and a large number of fanatical sects. They were hostile to ecclesiastical government in any shape, whether exercised by elders or bishops. Thus there were at the outset three distinct parties. As time went on, however, the anti-Church tendencies of Parliament increased. Presbyterians and Independents might not agree on many points—indeed, a few years later they were contending furiously—but for the present they could combine against the bishops as a common enemy. And the Church party throughout the country was dispirited by the lamentable weakness of Charles. He signed

Strafford's death-warrant, he gave the royal assent to a bill depriving bishops of their votes in the House of Lords, and even agreed to a Scottish Act which declared that "the government of the Church by bishops is repugnant to the Word of God." This, of course, was quite contrary to his real belief. But he assented to its publication with his authority in the vain hope of strengthening his popularity in Scotland. What he actually did was to encourage his enemies and to dishearten his friends.

No less vacillating did he show himself in the constitutional struggle between himself and Parliament. It seemed to his best supporters as if an evil fate pursued his actions. He wavered when in firmness lay his only hope. He was obstinate when a timely concession might even yet have saved the position. More hopeless daily became the chances of a peaceful settlement, and in the summer of 1642 the Civil War began. With the details of that mournful struggle we are not concerned in these pages. Our task is to notice how the fall of the king was followed quickly by the fall of the Church. Puritanism gained rapidly in power, and Parliament gave

effect to its wishes. In 1641 it made away with "deans and chapters, archdeacons, prebendaries, and canons." In the following year the enemies of episcopacy had their wish, and the order of bishops was declared to be abolished "root and branch." In 1643, as a return for military assistance from Scotland, Parliament accepted the "Solemn League and Covenant," which pledged all who subscribed to it to "the extirpation, without respect of persons, of prelacy; that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy." It was ordered that every person above the age of eighteen should formally renounce the Church by swearing to obey this Covenant. Such was "religious liberty" as the Puritans understood it. In 1645 the Prayer-book was suppressed, and any one using it, either publicly or privately, made liable to fine or imprisonment. A Presbyterian book of prayers known as "The Directory" was authorised to take its place.

On the same day that Parliament made this change it condemned Archbishop Laud

to death. Through nine months his trial had dragged on. All the attempts to convict him of treason failed. At last his condemnation, as that of Strafford had been, was secured by unconstitutional means. In the simple yet deeply touching speech which he delivered on the scaffold, he asserted once more his true fidelity to his Church: "I was born and baptized in the bosom of the Church of England," he said, "in that profession I have ever since lived, and in that I come now to die. . . . I forgive all the world, all and every of those bitter enemies which have persecuted me; and humbly desire to be forgiven of God first, and then of every man. And so I heartily desire you to join in prayer with me." Then he prayed for his enemies, for himself, for the Church, for the king, for Parliament. Then kneeling by the block he said: "Lord, I am coming as fast as I can. I know I must pass through the shadow of death before I can come to see Thee. But it is a mere shadow of death, a little darkness upon nature; but Thou by Thy merits and passion hast broke through the jaws of death. So, Lord, receive my soul; and bless this kingdon with peace and plenty and with brotherly love, that there

may not be this effusion of Christian blood amongst them, for Jesus Christ's sake, if it be Thy will." "Then," adds one who stood by, "he laid his head upon the block, and after he had prayed to himself, said aloud, 'Lord, receive my soul,' which was the signal given to the executioner." Thus passed one who, with all his mistakes, loved his Church, understood its true greatness, and laboured, not in vain, to preserve it for future generations.

Four years later Charles followed Laud to the scaffold. At the end of his life he showed a courage which caused many to forget his earlier weakness. He was pressed by his captors to accept the "League and Covenant," and to assent to the destruction of the Church. He refused stedfastly. He was willing to allow a Presbyterian system to exist side by side with the Church. No other concession would he make. Had he yielded, there is no reason to doubt that his life would have been saved and the Church doomed. He preferred to atone for his previous errors by saving the Church at the cost of his life. We cannot forget his many mistakes, his fatuous blindness, his disregard of his people's liberty, his fatal irresolution, his strange vanity. Yet, if

we cannot forget them, at least much may be forgiven to one who chose to die on the scaffold rather than to reign as the betrayer of the Church.

During the first years of Parliamentary rule the Presbyterian section of the Puritans held the upper hand. And Presbyterianism, defective as it may seem to Churchmen, at least comprises a very definite system of ecclesiastical government and enforces a strict discipline. Too strict, indeed, it soon proved for that other Puritan section, the Independents. They in turn acquired the mastery. Lacking all efficient control, having neither book of prayer nor confession of faith, they quickly broke up into a vast number of sects, of which each new one tried to exceed all its predecessors in eccentricity. Among them were the "Seekers," "Ranters," "Vanists" and "Fifty Monarchy men." Little can we find in common between their ribaldries and the grave austerity which traditionally is supposed to have characterised all the Puritans. Oliver Cromwell found it needful to check them with a stern hand. As early as 1650 an Act had been passed to punish those who taught that drunkenness and immorality are

in their own nature as holy as prayer, that unrighteousness is a matter of opinion alone, and that heaven and hell are mere myths. The necessity of such legislation gives us some idea of what these sects professed. Cromwell, whose strange conception of toleration has been mentioned already, determined to give full religious liberty to all but these members of "licentious sects" and "enemies of the State," under which latter term he classified all members of the English and Roman Churches. This was not a piece of hypocrisy on Cromwell's part. He was absolutely sincere. He really believed himself to be wide-minded and tolerant. But, in his scheme of things, tolerance was impossible for those who certainly loved the Church and possibly, therefore, favoured in secret the restoration of a Stuart king. Guided by this belief, so far from tolerating Churchmen, he persecuted them with a cruelty as ingenious as it was vindictive.

Their sufferings had not been slight before he assumed the chief position in the State. About one thousand clergy had been driven from their livings by the Covenant oath. Presbyterian divines appropriated their houses and their incomes. All clergy suspected of

royalist leanings were ejected as "malignants." Any sort of excuse served the end of their enemies. One vicar was deprived because he was seen walking in his garden on a Sunday evening, which was "profaning the Sabbath." Another lost his living because he had a reputation for learning, and the committee which arraigned him remarked that learned clergy were especially dangerous. A third incumbent had the misfortune to own a greyhound, which chased a hare as its master was walking across a field on Sunday. He was promptly convicted of "coursing on the sabbath day" and driven from his cure. But such pretexts soon became unnecessary. After the adoption of the Covenant in 1644 no minister could hold office who had not bound himself by an oath to "extirpate prelacy." In 1646 Presbyterianism was established by law. This involved the disestablishment of the Church, and the replacement of any clergy who remained loyal to it and had not already suffered deprivation in consequence. But while the presbyterian system was fully planned on paper, at no time was it carried out with thoroughness. Admirably as it suited the Scottish tempera-

ment, it dissatisfied the English. The Independents were bitterly averse from it. Nominally it continued to be in force till 1660. But practically we may say that it had broken down by 1649. From 1649 to 1653 there was a period of wild anarchy —one, indeed, which brought comparative respite to Churchmen, because Presbyterian Puritan and Independent Puritan were fighting so fiercely with each other that they were too fully occupied to persecute the Church. In 1653 the iron hand of Oliver Cromwell imposed his Constitution, by which these quarrels, outwardly at least, were peremptorily checked. He enforced toleration as he understood it. The "Instrument of Government" set forth that "such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth"—*i.e.*, those of Presbyterianism — "shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and the exercise of their religion, so that they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others and the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts: *provided that this liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy*,

nor to such as under the profession of Christ hold forth and practise licentiousness."

In other words, Presbyterianism was to remain the legal religion of the country. Independents and Baptists were to have full religious liberty, but the Romanist and English Churchmen were to be classed with the teachers of "licentiousness," and receive no sort of toleration. As for the irregular sects condemned by this enactment, they expressed their opinion of it and of Cromwell with considerable frankness. "We have been cheated," they wrote, "cozened and betrayed by that grand impostor, that loathsome hypocrite, that detestable traitor, that prodigy of nature, that sink of sin, and that compendium of baseness, who now calls himself our Protector." Not they alone felt the sense of betrayal. The country had been drenched with blood, king and archbishop had been executed, every historic tradition had been overthrown, the constitution which had served England through long centuries overturned—and all this had been done for the sake of gaining civil and religious freedom. Where was civil liberty? The rule of Cromwell proved more despotic than that of a king.

What was the religious freedom he permitted? Freedom to share his own views, which were Independent; freedom to accept the Presbyterian system, which had been established by law before his advent to power—and otherwise no freedom at all. Neither "papist," "prelatist," nor "sectary" might look for anything save persecution while the government was in Cromwell's hands.

To the clergy of the English Church he showed himself only less hostile than to the Roman Catholic priests whom he butchered in Ireland. Already about 7000 of them had been driven from their homes, to wander with their wives and families in a state of destitution. Nor does this estimate include the curates, schoolmasters, and chaplains who shared the same fate. Many were imprisoned; many were literally starved to death. Into the parishes from which they had been driven came a Presbyterian or Independent minister—often a cobbler or a wheelwright, of no education but infinite assurance, who occupied the pulpit with great relish. To use the Prayer-book was a crime; to be married in church was a crime; to observe Christmas, save as a mournful fast, was a crime.

Driven to despair, some of the clergy attempted, when the Presbyterian system had broken down, to obtain work once more; but in 1654 a commission was appointed to examine any man presented to a benefice. Its real object was to exclude all those who had been ordained by bishops. Any suspected of episcopal sympathies were heckled for weeks on end. One man was questioned as to the year, day, and hour of his conversion, and was rejected on the plea that his replies were too indefinite. In 1665 the clergy suffered a blow from Cromwell more cruel and openly vindictive than any which had preceded it. Driven from their homes, banished from their churches, reduced to pitiful indigence, many of the ejected clergy had managed to earn a wage of some sort as private chaplains or schoolmasters. Now the Protector published an edict, to take effect on the following 1st of January, forbidding those who had been ejected to preach in public or private, to be employed as chaplains, or to teach in schools. Thus wantonly was snatched from them their last hope of earning enough to maintain in some degree themselves, their wives, and their children. That faithful Churchman, John

Evelyn, wrote in his diary: "I went to London at the end of December 1655, where Dr. Wild preached the funeral sermon on preaching, this being the last day, after which Cromwell's proclamation was to take place, that none of the Church of England should dare either to preach or administer sacraments, teach school, etc., on pain of imprisonment or exile. So this was the mournfullest day I had seen. . . . So pathetic was his discourse, that it drew many tears from the auditory. . . . The Lord Jesus pity our distressed Church and bring back the captivity of Sion."

While such records of the past testify to the Puritan persecution of the clergy, in many a cathedral and parish church other evidence of their bigotry can be seen by our own eyes. Not thus indeed can we realise the full extent of the havoc made. No trace is left of the altar-plate melted down, of the tapestry torn to shreds, of the service-books burnt in the market-place. But bullet-holes in the walls—made when the Parliamentary troops diverted themselves by shooting at some sacred picture—mutilated carvings, defaced figures, fragments of exquisite stained-glass which alone survive

to tell of what was destroyed; all these are sad memorials of the period in which Puritan fanaticism set itself to extirpate "popery." The stern necessities of war cannot be pleaded to excuse such deeds. They might palliate, though they could not justify, the use of a cathedral as a parade-ground or of a church as a stable. But no military needs moved the soldiers to smash windows, to set up a figure of a saint, or of our Lord Himself, as a target, to broach their barrels of ale within the sanctuary. Such outrages were due wholly to that savage and senseless fanaticism which, in the Puritans' public actions, contrasted so strangely with the rigid discipline and restraint shown in their private lives.

Yet throughout this time of tribulation the old Church was not dead. In many a cellar or private chapel men gathered by stealth to listen to the words of the Prayer-book. Here and there the Sacraments were duly administered still. Despite the Puritan vigilance, secret ordinations were held, lest the continuity of the Church's ministry should fail. Such men as Dr. Hammond gave liberally of their wealth towards relieving, so far as they could, the sufferings of the outcast clergy. And

presently signs of a national reaction began to be manifest. Having gained its triumph, Puritanism had shown itself in its true colours. Many of those who had assisted its victory had lived bitterly to regret their success. In place of the promised freedom, they found themselves under the most tyrannical of despotisms. Above all else, love for the ancient Church reasserted itself. In one parish the people dared to expel the Puritan intruded upon them by Cromwell's authority, and to bring back the lawful incumbent. In another the parishioners insisted successfully that the service used at a burial should be that of the Prayer-book, and not its Presbyterian equivalent. Slight in themselves, such incidents showed the trend of popular feeling. In September, 1658, Oliver Cromwell died, and the Government passed from his strong hands into the nerveless grasp of his son. But of Puritan government and Puritan religion alike England had had its fill. The hour had come to free itself from bondage. Indeed, the fetters, to outward appearance as strong as ever, had become rusty and weak. Not a blow, and hardly an effort was needed to make them fall to the earth. Amid triumphant shouts,

amidst a blaze of rejoicing which lighted the country from one end to the other, the rightful king was brought back to his realm, to be crowned and anointed by the ancient Church, and to sit on the throne of his fathers.

CHAPTER X

THE RESTORATION SETTLEMENT

The Restoration of the king involved, without need of further action, the restoration of the Church. Since all the ordinances of the last twenty years were held to be unconstitutional and illegal, no authority of Parliament was required to set them aside. At once such bishops as had survived the time of trouble resumed their sees. Juxon, who had attended Charles I. on the scaffold, was present as Archbishop of Canterbury at the coronation of Charles II. The ejected clergy dispossessed in turn the intruders, and were welcomed back to their old parishes. The Te Deum and Magnificat, instead of "an exact emendation of the whole book of Psalms made by Francis Rouse, Esq." rang down the aisles of the cathedrals. In its religion, as in its form of government, the

English people stood once more in the old paths and the ancient ways.

One lesson more clearly than any other had been taught by the recent disorders. Puritanism and the religion of the historic Church were not to be reconciled. The difference between them was not one merely of ritual. It went far deeper. It touched fundamentals. It was not less great than that which, at the other extreme, separated the English Church from that of Rome. And of toleration, in the modern sense, there was yet but little idea. We have seen in what way Cromwell had interpreted the word. If he would make no concessions to Churchmen, since they were known to uphold monarchy, so, after the Restoration, were Churchmen loth to grant much liberty to the Puritans, who had beheaded Charles and Laud. Therefore in self-defence the Puritans rallied in a final effort, for the success of which they could feel but little hope. Again they aimed at nothing less than capturing the Church of England. Otherwise their position would be insecure. But if they could cause such radical changes in the Prayer-book as they desired, they would gain a point of

vantage from which it would be difficult to dislodge them. Against the Prayer-book therefore, they began a fierce attack. As the "Preface," composed in 1662, observes: "Divers pamphlets were published against the Book of Common Prayer, the old objections mustered up, with the addition of some new ones, more than formerly had been made, to make the number swell."

In order to learn precisely the nature of the objections, and to ascertain how far they could be met without any sacrifice of essential doctrine, a conference between leading Churchmen and Puritan divines was held in 1661, at the Bishop of London's lodgings in the Savoy. The Puritans selected eight points for special attack. A number of others they mentioned as "inexpedient," but these seemed to them to merit the stronger condemnation of being "sinful and contrary to the word of God." Among the eight were the use of the surplice, kneeling at Holy Communion, calling all baptized persons regenerate, making the sign of the cross in baptism, and subscription to the Articles and Prayer-book. These being their grievances, it was obvious that the Conference could lead to no useful

result. Upon some matters the Church could have afforded to compromise for the sake of peace. But when it was invited to agree that its primary doctrine of baptismal regeneration was "contrary to the Word of God," when it was asked to pronounce "sinful" so elementary an act of reverence as that of kneeling at the moment of communion—then, as its representatives felt, the proposals brought before it were not less than flagrantly impossible. For the last time Puritanism had made, in a formal way, its specific demands. For the last time they were rejected, not from any bigoted motives, but because the Church could not accept them without destroying its position as an integral part of the Universal Church of Christ.

Realising the hopelessness of further negotiations, the Church proceeded to revise its Prayer-book in a way to meet the spiritual needs of its own members rather than to suit the requirements of Puritanism. More than to any other of the revisers, our Prayer-book owes its present form—since the revision of 1662 was the last—to that great liturgical genius Cosin, Bishop of Durham. The "Preface" already quoted, was the work of

Bishop Sanderson, and deserves to be read, alike for its historic interest and for its explanation of the principles by which the revisers were guided. Generally speaking, we may say that the changes and additions made at this time—for a detailed study of which the reader must be referred once more to "The Story of the Prayer Book," rendered the whole volume a distinct improvement upon the form adopted at its previous revision in the reign of Elizabeth. As it stood when Sanderson wrote his preface, and as it stands to-day, it is capable of fulfilling the hope he expressed, by satisfying the needs of "all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England." It embodies in the plainest way the true teaching of our Church. It is removed as widely from the errors of Rome as from those of Puritanism. For two-and-a-half centuries it has been in use without a day's intermission. Its publication made clear to all men the abiding character of our Church. On May 19, 1662, it was finally authorised by Parliament. At last the twofold struggle with Rome and Puritanism was ended. The Church had found its resting-place. The Reformation was complete.

So we have reached the close of its story. There is a sense, indeed, in which the process of change must be unceasing, since the Church must adapt her means to the needs of each new generation. Yet for that is needed but a re-adaptation of means, not a reformation of character. Slowly shaped through the period of 130 years which we have studied, the intrinsic character of the Church was brought to its enduring form at the time of the Restoration Settlement. Modified as that character has been by a number of conflicting influences, made subservient to the Crown by Henry VIII., too merely Protestant in the days of Edward VI., too Roman by Mary, too much the accompaniment of a political theory by James and Charles I., yet not for a moment did the Church itself cease to exist, never was it merged in any new body, never was there a date to which men could point and say with truth "here it happened that the ancient Church of England, the Church of Augustine, Theodore and Anselm, was replaced by a new organisation." Made the unwilling slave of Rome it was in the days of Mary, persecuted and driven from its rightful place in the twenty years of anarchy, but through all

it remained, and remains to-day, the Church of England. It is national in that it belongs to this country, it is Protestant in the sense that it repudiates the unwarrantable claims of Rome, but not less is it Catholic, being of no human origin, but tracing back its descent through bishops and apostles to its Divine Master Himself.

This is one fact which is pressed upon us by the study of Church history. Again, as we look back upon the events of the 130 years briefly described in these pages, we cannot but be struck by another lesson—one which Christians have been slow to learn, one which in our own time is but imperfectly understood. That lesson is the folly of intolerance. We have seen how in turn one party after another became dominant in ecclesiastical affairs, and in turn fell through the misuse of its power. Henry's "Six Articles," with their savage penalties, gave extreme Protestantism its foothold in the days of Edward. The tyranny of Edward's Council made England welcome with enthusiasm the advent of Mary to the throne. Mary ruined the cause of Romanism by her insane cruelty. So sternly was Puritanism

repressed in the days of Elizabeth and James that it broke forth in ungovernable fury when Charles was king. Then, finally, the violence and intolerance of Puritanism lost it in twenty years the whole support of England, and almost as one man the nation cast it away. These facts have a lasting significance. Whatever section of religious thought may be in the ascendant at any particular time, nothing can be more certain than its speedy fall if the use which it makes of power be an attempt to crush all divergent opinion.

Moreover, a study of our Church's history should fill us with thankfulness, courage, and indomitable hope. We cannot value lightly the heritage which is ours when we have seen at what a cost it has been won. We cannot let our present duty pass quite unfulfilled when we meditate upon the work of those who came before us. We cannot feel gloomily despondent about the future when we recall the perils through which its Master has brought safely this English Church of ours in the past. Seldom, perhaps, has dismal prophecy been more popular than to-day. We are told of vast dangers before us. We are warned that the people are losing

belief in our creeds. We are assured that the foes of the Church will soon prevail and crush it utterly. Even so—though with far more show of truth—might men have spoken in the days of Cromwell! But if we know the past story of our Church we can face the future unafraid. Its strength is the strength of God. No Act of Parliament created it, no Act of Parliament can destroy it. With the aid of the State, or in spite of the State, it will prevail. Still, by God's help, it will abide: representing the religious consciousness of the nation, binding in fellowship Christ's disciples, ministering His Sacraments, while, alike by its common worship and its care for the individual, it provides, amid the changing circumstances of every age, for the unchanging needs of the souls of men.

THE END

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